



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

WORKS PUBLISHED BY D. BATTEN, CLAPHAM COMMON;
Hatchard & Son; and Simpkin, Marshall & Co.

By the late Ven. Archdeacon DEALTRY, D.D., F.R.S.

Sermons, chiefly Practical, Preached in
the Parish Church of Clapham. 2nd Edition, Price 10s. 6d.

Sermons, Doctrinal and Practical, Preached
in the Parish Church of Clapham, Surrey. Price 10s. 6d.

"In this latter volume will be found his views, candidly and forcibly stated, on some of the controverted topics of the day. The general style of his composition is easy, natural, flowing, and persuasive. He was a man to whom the most intellectual listened with fixed attention, while the common people heard him gladly. One of his sermons may be particularly singled out as a happy specimen of his skill in concentrating scientific talents to the cause of religion: it is his discourse on the evening of Sunday, May 15, 1836, delivered a few hours after a total eclipse of the sun, which occurred on that day.

Certain Familiar Words: a Charge deliver-
ed in the Autumn of 1843, at the Visitation in Hampshire. 2nd ed.

The Foundation of the Faith: a Charge
delivered in October, 1846, to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Surrey.

The Government Plan of Education: a
Charge intended for delivery on the Visitation in October, 1847, to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Surrey.

By the Rev. CHARLES KEMBLE, M.A.

A Protestant's Principle in Times of Peril.
A Sermon preached on Sunday, November 3, 1850. Price 6d.

The Great Exhibition of 1851. A Sermon
preached on Sunday, February 2, 1851. Price 6d.

A Manual for Communicants of the Church
of England. Royal 32mo. 4d. Cloth, gilt edges, 6d. Embossed cloth, bds. 1s.

Venite Exultemus, Magnificat, &c., Pointed
for Chanting. With Appropriate Chants, arranged in Four Parts. 18mo., embossed cloth, gilt edges. 1s. 6d.

Dedicated, by permission, to the Lord Bishop of Winchester.

A Collection of Psalm and Hymn Tunes,
as sung at Clapham Church; to which are added some Chants, with the Words divided, as sung at the Cathedrals; also the Responses to the Commandments, with the Words at length. Selected, composed, and arranged for Four Voices, with a separate part for Organ, by J. BLACKBURN, Organist.

By the Venerable ARCHDEACON HOARE.

The Blessed Death of the Righteous: a Funeral Sermon preached in the Parish Church, Clapham, on Sunday Morning, October 24, 1847, after the Death of the Venerable Archdeacon Dealtry, D.D., F.R.S. 1s.

A Charge delivered at the Primary Visitation of the Archdeaconry of Surrey, in October, 1848. 1s. 6d.

By the Rev. T. MACGILL, Late Curate of Clapham.

A Sermon preached in the Parish Church of Clapham, on the National Fast Day. 6d.

A Sermon preached at Morning Service, in the Parish Church of Clapham, for an Abundant Harvest, Oct. 7, 1847. 1s.

A Sermon preached at Morning Service, in the Parish Church of Clapham, on the 5th of November, 1848. 6d.; on Inferior Paper, for circulation, 16s. per hundred.

He was Buried: a Sermon for Easter Even. 6d.

Liturgical Notes; to which are added Four Sermons, preached after his return to England, May, 1850. 12mo. boards.

By the Rev. G. A. ROGERS, M.A.

Sermons preached at St. James's Chapel, Clapham, 12mo. cloth. Price 6s.

A Minister's Parting Enquiry. A Farewell Sermon, preached at St. James's Chapel, Clapham, on Sunday Morning, Oct. 31, 1847. Price 1s.

Short Family Prayers for every Morning and Evening of the Month, and for particular occasions; Selected and Arranged from the Liturgy, Psalms, and various Eminent Writers. By WILLIAM SOLTAU, Esq. Third Edition, enlarged. 12mo. 3s.

Popery, the Inquisition, and the Jesuits: Historical Facts, exposing their Profligate and Dangerous Tenets. Price 1s.

Remarks on the Present Danger from Romish Aggression, and the difference between Romanism and the Church of England. By A LAY MEMBER. Price 1s.



600108006L

LITURGICAL NOTES;

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

FOUR SERMONS,

PREACHED AFTER HIS RETURN TO ENGLAND, MAY, 1850.

BY THE LATE

REV. THOMAS MACGILL,

CURATE OF CLAPHAM,

AND EVENING PREACHER AT THE MAGDALEN HOSPITAL.



D. BATTEN, CLAPHAM COMMON;

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO. STATIONERS' COURT, LONDON.

AND WARING WEBB, LIVERPOOL.

1851.

138. d. 312.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY D. BATTEN,
CLAPHAM COMMON.

The Reverend THOMAS MACGILL, died of Consumption, at Clapham, on the 26th of August, 1850, and it is at the request of several Inhabitants of that Parish, who were attached to his person, and indebted to his ministry, that these Sermons and Liturgical Notes, are now offered to the public.

The Sermons are considered, by these kind friends, as not only interesting, from being the last their Author was permitted to preach, but also as calculated, by their high and holy tone, to promote that cause in which he so cheerfully spent his declining strength.

The Notes have already appeared in a periodical; but it is judged that their re-publication may be useful, especially in the present day, to some who have it not in their power to consult more extensive works on the Services of our Church.

Clapham, 1851.

LITURGICAL NOTES.

ADVENT SUNDAY.

THE Catholic, Apostolic Church has been visible in all ages by its episcopal government, its holy liturgies, its administration of the two sacraments, and its adoption in all countries of the same system of teaching. Whatever shades of opinion or varieties in usage, we find in different places, or in the same place at different periods, still the Church has had in view the same principles and ends. As "the ground and pillar of the truth," she has perpetuated the doctrines committed to her keeping by a series of Fasts and Festivals, commemorative of certain great events, which she

desires to impress on the minds of her children, by marking out certain seasons and days for their observance. The periodical return of these occasions is not regulated by the ordinary computations of the world, but by the career of the "Sun of Righteousness," from the first dawn of His glory, when there was a voice crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," until the hour of His meridian splendour, when He ascended to His Father, and our Father, to His God, and our God. The Church begins her year with the season of Advent, the springtime of promise to the Christian, when, by contemplating the humility of Christ's first coming, in the weakness of mortal flesh, he can with greater confidence await His second coming in the majesty of His glory.

As God prepared the world for Messiah's birth, by antecedent prophecies, so the Church prepares our minds for the due observance of Christmas, by the services of four Sundays, and a Collect to be said

daily until Christmas Eve. Each of these Sundays has its special instruction.

The Gospel for the first Sunday is selected on account of these words contained in it—"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." The Epistle reminds us of the second Advent, in the words—"The day is at hand"—and it makes this an argument for repentance, watchfulness, and mutual love. The four last verses have been read on this Sunday for 1,400 years; the three first were added at the Reformation.

The Collect embodies the whole subject of the Epistle and Gospel in a prayer, to be said daily. Advent Sunday is frequently made a day of peculiar rejoicing in many congregations, and the minister often encourages them in this, by appointing fanciful hymns to be sung, and preaching on triumphant topics; but such does not seem to be the mind of the Church. The season of Advent is a long vigil before the Nativity. Our rejoicings must be restrained

until that day when we glorify God. "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given." It is now, the sublime prophecies of Isaiah begin to be read, and are continued to the end of the Epiphany season.

The exhortations to repentance, contained in the two first chapters, read on this Sunday, are an additional reason for viewing Advent as a penitential and not a jubilant season.

FEAST OF ST. ANDREW.

This festival is very properly placed nearest to the Advent of our Lord, as St. Andrew was a follower of John Baptist, and is the first instance recorded of the open acknowledgment of Jesus as Messiah. The life and character of this apostle are well suited for contemplation at this season, for in them we learn the necessity of being instructed in the doctrine of repentance and sorrow for sin, before we are fit for the

reception of the Gospel of the atonement. St. Andrew was the son of Jonas, and brother of Simon Peter, and by occupation a fisherman in the Lake Gennesaret. As an apostle, he preached the Gospel in some countries in the east, and was crucified under Algeas, pro-consul of Achaia. At a later period his remains were removed by Constantine the Great, and interred with great solemnity in the capital of his empire.

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

Whilst the services of this season chiefly allude to the first and second Advents of our Lord, they are also intended to remind the people of three great privileges belonging to the Church—namely, the gift of the Holy Scriptures, a divinely appointed ministry, and the two sacraments. In the Epistle for this Sunday, the first of these privileges is introduced, and from it we learn the origin, authority, and design of

the Bible. In thus bringing the Scriptures forward at so early a season—the second Sunday of the Ecclesiastical year—the Church intimates the supreme value she attaches to the written word of God. However highly she reveres other means of grace, and however stedfastly she maintains her hold of certain traditional opinions, usages, and discipline, she desires, not only that nothing shall supersede the teaching of the Scriptures, but that nothing shall be believed which is not agreeable to that infallible standard of truth.

Catholic tradition, as delivered in the formularies of the Church, is the best witness to the right interpretation of Scripture, and she maintains her prerogative of defining to mankind the truths necessary to salvation. Yet no branch of the Universal Church has ever shown greater liberality in allowing its members the free perusal of the Scriptures, and no Church has appointed so much of them to be read in her offices. In the Collect for this Sun-

day, she plainly testifies her belief that to "hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the Scripture will lead to the abiding hope of everlasting life, given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ; and, consistently, with such a prayer, she freely puts the Bible into the hands of the people, in their own language, and without note or comment.

The Gospel refers to the destruction of the Jewish polity, and to the final judgment. The expression, "Kingdom of God," refers to the Christian dispensation, which was then to be published to every people and nation, after the destruction of Jerusalem. The fearful predictions in this passage are not easily reconcilable with the circumstances which actually attended the siege and capture of the Holy City by Titus, but seem to have a far greater application. The interpreters of prophecy understand by such expressions the convulsions of states, the destruction of political institutions, the rise and fall of empires. The

sun, and the moon, and the stars, are figurative names for kings, hierarchies, and people. The first Morning Lesson contains a beautiful parable, emblematic of the distinguishing privileges, responsibilities, and threatened judgments of the Church of God. Well does this passage suggest corresponding circumstances, characters, and admonitions to the mind of every faithful member of the Church of England !

Would that a sense of our privileges produced the fruits of a deeper holiness, unity, and peace at home, and exertions commensurate with our mighty resources, for the regeneration of mankind abroad !

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT. EMBER WEEK.

The office of the Christian Ministry is the subject of this day's services.

God has never left mankind without some ambassadorial representatives, to whom is entrusted the duty of reminding the world of the claims which God has on

its fidelity and service. To these delegates, or ministers, is entrusted the duty of presenting the wants and weaknesses of their brethren at the throne of God, and they are accredited channels of grace to man. What the sons of the patriarchs, the family of Aaron, and the tribe of Levi, were to their brethren, the apostles of Christ were to the Church; and to these apostles the Lord said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."

Thus began the order of Christian Priests, and through all the vicissitudes of the Church—its triumphs and its trials—its calms and its tempests—that order has continued unbroken, and will so continue until the final establishment of Christ's universal empire. The Gospel points out the duties of a Christian minister, by reference to the office of John the Baptist. He held, in reference to the Jewish Church, the same office as the Christian minister holds in reference to the Christian Church, namely, to prepare men's minds for the

coming of Christ. In setting such a model before her ministers, the Church acts a wise and a very significant part. She holds up to view, a man who singularly fulfilled an apostolical mission, by his humility, by his retirement from the world, by his abstinence, by his bold rebukes, and by the universality of his teaching. She sets forth the example of a minister of Christ, who “preached not himself,” but continually testified by his conduct and his words, “I am not the Christ,”—a minister who put away from himself the applause of men, and directed their regards to the “Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world”—a minister who did not fear boldly to go forth to the rebuke of vice, the conversion of sinners, and the manly enforcement of Gospel truth. “These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

Let the reader bear in mind that next week will be the fourth Ember season of the year, and that daily prayer is to

be made in the Universal Church for those that are to be admitted into Holy Orders, or promoted to any office and administration in the Church. How opportunely do this Sunday's services come to stir up both ministers and people to the fitting sentiments and spirit required at such a season! But who will "believe our report?"

The Epistle is selected from St. Paul's reply to the Corinthians, who had found fault with the apostle's doctrine and conduct. He declares it of small moment for him to be condemned of man's judgment, for God alone can judge righteously, knowing the thoughts and intents of the heart. He exhorts them, therefore, not to examine him and other apostles by the rules and maxims of popular opinion, but to receive them as "ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." They were ministers of Christ, as ordained by Christ himself, deriving authority and commission from Him, and as being responsible to

12 FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.—CHRISTMAS DAY.

Him alone. They were stewards of the mysteries of God, as authorised to preach the great truths of the Gospel to the people, to dispense the riches of grace contained in the Sacraments, and as stewards of God's household, to give every man his meat in due season.

The First Lessons may be considered one song of praise: they exhibit the glorious prospects of advantage at the second coming of Christ, and animate with joy all who "love his appearing."

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT. CHRISTMAS DAY.

The services of the fourth Sunday in Advent do not require particular notice. They are preparatory to the joyful celebration of Christmas, and give the key-note to the Church's hallelujahs on that blessed day.

No passage of Scripture could be better chosen for the first day of the week in

which Christ was born, than The Gospel which contains the words of His herald, John the Baptist, “There standeth one among you whom ye know not.”

The Epistle refers to the second coming, but not (as on the previous Sundays) in the language of alarm, but rather of confidence and joy, “Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice: the Lord is at hand.”

Christmas Day is, perhaps, the only great festival which all the churches seem to have been unanimous in retaining. And surely no event in the history of mankind is so wonderful as this!—“God manifest in the flesh.” Two things this day appeared united for the first time—God and man, in one being. The Son of God becomes the son of man that we, who are sons of men, might become sons of God. The subject is too immense for our limited capacities—the magnificence of the design overpowers our poor senses: what, then,

c

can we say of it in this brief sketch? Let us confine our remarks to the ritual.

Whilst this Festival commemorates the humanity of our Lord, both The Epistle and Gospel relate to his Divinity. The one proving his pre-existing glory in the unseen world, and the other declaring the continuance of the divine nature in Christ after his incarnation. These truths form the one great mystery of Christianity.

The preface of the Gospel according to St. John, part of which is this day read, will ever be regarded as the declaration and defence of the humanity, divinity, and office of Christ.

There are Second Lessons as well as First, appointed for this feast, and they are selected with singular good taste, and a just appreciation of Scripture language and evangelical prophecy.

The First Morning Lesson contains the prophecy which this day especially fulfilled—"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." Reader, who can by

searching find out the ways of God? Behold a little babe laid in a manger, in the stable of an obscure village inn, without servants to wait on him, without the common comforts of a poor man's cottage,—yet this is He who is “Wonderful, Counsellor,”—yea, “The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace!” Let us bow our heads in meek prostration of heart before that Child—“For us men, and for our salvation, He came down from heaven.”

Who will say that the men who chose such passages and appointed such psalms for this great day, belonged to a darker age, and were dead to the new lights of the nineteenth century? Alas! What a wide distance between their lofty conceptions of public praise and prayer, and the discord and schism so prevalent in our unhappy days.

Particularly would we call attention to the Proper Psalms, as admirably suited to express the Church's praises at this glad

season. The first five verses of the xix. Psalm seem to anticipate the angelic chorus, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace." The xlv. Psalm is, from the beginning to the end, a birthday ode, uttered by the tongue of inspiration. Who can mistake the words, "Thou art fairer than the children of men"—"Good luck have thou with thine honour: ride on, because of the word of truth, of meekness and righteousness"? In the 10th verse there is an elegant allusion to the Jewish Church—"The Queen in a vesture of gold;" and, in the 14th, to the Gospel Church—"The King's daughter is all glorious within." The lxxxv. Psalm speaks of the "mercy and truth, righteousness and peace," which this day met together and kissed each other. The lxxxix., tells of Christ's glory as a triumphant King; the cx., of His eternal office as a priest; and the cxxxii. speaks of the Holy Church universal—"This shall be my rest for ever; here will I dwell"—

‘I will deck her priests with health, and her saints shall rejoice and sing.’

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.

The Church of England continues the celebration of the Festival of Christmas by introducing other portions of Scripture bearing on the event, and explanatory of its design and benefits. The Epistle speaks of the adoption into God’s family, which Christ procured for the fallen children of Adam; release from the bondage of the Jewish law; and the introduction of a new dispensation, characterised by grace and truth.

The Gospel relates some circumstances attendant on the birth of our Saviour—the naming of the child Jesus, by the Angels, and the reason for it—“He shall save His people from their sins.”

The First Evening Lesson is Isaiah xxxviii., a chapter selected rather in reference to the period of the year when it is

read, than to the event of our Lord's birth. "Set thy house in order, for thou shall die, and not live," is a becoming admonition at the close of one year, or the beginning of another; and, whilst we are too apt to indulge in festivity at this time, it is right that we should be reminded of the shortness and uncertainty of life.

It is thus that the Church teaches us, in the midst of our Christmas rejoicings, "so to number our days, as to apply our hearts unto wisdom."

INNOCENTS' DAY.

The Festival of Christ's nativity is followed by that of the first victims who suffered on His account.

According to ancient ritualists there are three kinds of martyrdom; first, martyrdom, in will and in deed, as St. Stephen's; secondly, in will, but not in deed, as St. John's, who was condemned to martyrdom, but escaped and died a peaceful death;

thirdly, in deed, but not in will, such as these Innocents. The Epistle intimates the mind of the Church, that these babes having been made partakers of the sufferings of Christ, exchanged the foretaste of the pains of earth for the foretaste of the joys of heaven. The Gospel relates the massacre by Herod. The First Morning Lesson is beautifully adapted to the occasion. Jerusalem was in a state of siege, and Jeremiah speaks words of comfort to the Holy City. He assures the wasted provinces, through which the enemy passed, that their distresses would be relieved, and that their captive children would return to their own border—a prophecy fulfilled in the return of the people from the Babylonish captivity. St. Matthew, by an elegant figure, applies this language to the sorrowing mothers of Bethlehem :—" In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning; Rachael weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."

CIRCUMCISION.

Having assumed the human nature, Christ became subject to the law in all things, and enters into the privileges of the covenant with Abraham. He must needs be made in all things like unto His brethren. This festival falls on New Year's Day, and, in ancient times, the rejoicings on that day were intemperate and excessive, which gave occasion to Christians to hesitate on celebrating our Lord's circumcision at such a time; but the Church of England, always choosing a middle path, appoints religious acts of praise in honour of an event so important in the history of our blessed Redeemer. The Sacrament of Circumcision is the subject of the First Morning Lesson; the Second, teaches the duty incumbent upon those who believe in the circumcision of our Lord, to seek the true circumcision of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter. To the same effect is the First

Evening Lesson. The Second Evening Lesson is well selected from St. Paul's remarks on circumcision and baptism, which latter sacrament took the place of the other.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.

It so seldom happens that there are two Sundays between Christmas and the Epiphany, that no special Collect, Epistle and Gospel, are appointed for a second Sunday after Christmas ; but by a rubric in the 2nd Book of King Edward the VI., those of the Circumcision are ordered to be used again. There are, however, First Lessons, Isaiah xli. and xliii. The former contains a prophecy of the miraculous spread of the Gospel, and God's appeal to His people against the idols of the heathen, and contrast in favour of His providential care of the Church. The other chapter is one of comfort, declares the great things

God will do for His people, and expostulates with them for their obstinacy and neglect of His worship.

THE EPIPHANY.

This Festival, which commemorates a wonderful event in the sacred history, is celebrated in the Church of England, by the reading of sublime and significant portions of Scripture. This day commemorates the arrival in Jerusalem of an embassy from the Gentiles to do honour to the newly-born and yet unknown Prince of Peace, in the benefits of whose reign all mankind, Jews and Heathens, are to be included. Amidst the many wonderful events in the history of the Church there are few so striking as the journey of the wise men, and their miraculous guidance. How impressively graphic—how oriental are the accidents of the narrative! What a contrast between the barbaric richness of their gifts, and the

poverty of Him to whom they paid their court ! How remarkable the faith of these Magi ! When they found not the King of the Jews in His metropolis, they go to seek Him at an obscure village ; and finding Him at an inn, without attendants, without guards, without the ordinary appliances of a child of gentle birth, they express no surprise, they ask no questions—they fall down at His feet and worship Him ! We can readily enter into the sentiments of the early Christians who made much of this Festival. Many of them had been Gentiles, and felt that they were a kind of first fruits of this visit of the wise men. Are not we, the natives of a small island on the verge of the civilised world, partakers in a high degree of the mercy which called other heathens to the “Brightness of his rising ?” And where else hath the arm of the Lord been so signally revealed ? Then let us do honour to the Epiphany—let us make it a season of prayer for Jews and heathens, that they

may be converted—let us strengthen the hands and encourage the hearts of missionaries. There are First and Second Lessons for this occasion. Both they and the Epistle and Gospel are too plainly significant to require a word of comment. They relate various occasions on which Christ was *epiphanied*, or manifested — by the adoration of the wise men, by His baptism, and by the first miracle which He wrought at the marriage in Cana of Galilee.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

The services of this Sunday are of the same tenor as that of the Epiphany. The First Morning Lesson (Isaiah xlv.) contains an address to the Church of Israel. In the first eight verses, the prophet recounts the eternity and power of the Almighty, and describes the certainty of the divine promises, the mercy of God in having called his ancient people to the

peculiar blessings of the covenant, and the happiness of those that are called by His name. In the next twelve verses, an impressive description is given of the vanity and helplessness of idols, and the folly of their worshippers. The last verses recite a contrast between the weakness of idols and the omnipotence of Jehovah—His goodness and wisdom. The Lesson is appropriate to the season, which celebrates the manifestation of Christ to the heathen. The First Evening Lesson (Isaiah xli.) is selected with the same reference. Under the predicted fall of Bel and Nebo, the two Babylonian deities, the ruin of Babylon is foretold. It is a remarkable fact that all the nations which oppressed the kingdom of Israel have been successively erased from the list of nations. Egypt, Moab, Ammon, Amalek, and Philistia have perished; Assyria and Babylon have sunk into nothingness. The Epistle (Romans xii. 1—5).—The Apostle, having shown how God had called both Jews and Gentiles to the

d

blessing of one common faith, exhorts to holiness of life as the best proof of the right reception of it. The dead sacrifices of slaughtered victims have ceased to be acceptable, and the living body quickened by the Holy Spirit is now the only reasonable service of the Christian. The Gospel (St. Luke ii. 41—52) introduces us to an interesting period in our Lord's life. He is arrived at that age when the Jewish youths took upon themselves the obligations of their religion. He accompanies Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, and no sooner does He make His appearance in the Temple than a wonder comes to pass. So it was on every occasion when our Lord appeared in that sacred place as a human child. When He was presented as a babe, the spirit of prophecy spake through Simeon and Anna to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. When at twelve years He goes up as a boy, He is found in the midst of the doctors disputing with them and astound-

ing them with His wisdom. The object of the services of the Church at this season, is to present to us proofs of the divinity of Christ; and so all the Gospels are so many smaller Epiphanies of His glory in the flesh—proofs that “God was manifest in the flesh.”

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

The remarks we made on the services for Epiphany may be applied to each of the Sundays that immediately follow it. The Gospel for this Sunday relates the first miracle that Christ wrought, and concludes with these words—“this beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory.” The passage is admirably chosen: it was a miracle performed among Gentiles, and the Church is now teaching us that the great salvation was to include them in its beneficent design of mercy, as well as the Jews. The

Epistle (Rom. xii. 6,) alluding to the miracle of our Lord, enjoins Christians to use their gifts to the advantage of each other,—as Christ employed His divine gift of miracles in supplying the wants of the bridal party, so we are to minister to the necessities of our brethren, both in things temporal and spiritual. There is no member of the Church to whom God has not given some gift which may be available, either to the whole body or to a single individual in it. We are not all prophets, or apostles,—we are not all rich, or talented, or in stations of commanding influence; but we can all “love without dissimulation” —“be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another.” If we are poor in this world’s wealth, we can still be rich in the desire to do good, and, like our blessed Lord at the marriage feast, “distribute to the necessity of the saints.” True, we cannot convert water into wine, but we can “rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep

with them that weep." The First Lessons are the li. and liii. of Isaiah. The former chapter speaks to the Jews the language of encouragement, and persuades them to believe that the arm of the Lord will again awake and put on strength in behalf of His persecuted people. It tells of the re-peopling of Judæa, after it had lain waste, her restoration, and the joy of her returning exiles. The latter verses bewail the miseries of Jerusalem, and seem to allude to the restoration of a temporal kingdom in the land of Israel. The liii. chapter is too well known to need any notice in this place. Is it not written on the heart of every true Christian? The Church reads it twice in the year: now, when we begin to contemplate the life of the "Man of Sorrows," and again on Good Friday, when we bewail His death. In reference to the return of the Jews and their conversion to Christ, this beautiful and affecting chapter seems to be put into their mouths, in prophetic anticipation of their repentance.

d 2

“Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions.” Whilst such language is highly suitable for the Jewish penitents, it will be ever highly esteemed by the Christian. He will treasure the whole chapter as an epitome of the Scriptures and the perfect development of the office of Christ, from the day of His incarnation till He shall see of the travail of His soul in the salvation of those who believe in His name.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

The Collect is a prayer to God that in all dangers and necessities He would stretch forth His right hand to help and defend us; and the Gospel gives us two instances in which Christ exhibited His willingness and power to comply with a similar request. He cures the leprosy and the palsy.

In the first case, He gave one of the tokens which the Jews expected of Messiah—the cure of a disease which was typical of sin, and which defied the skill of any human physician. The cure of the centurion's servant, at a distance, by pronouncing the word, was a testimony that Christ was omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. Besides, this centurion was a Roman, and thus another proof was afforded that Christ was the Saviour of the Gentile as well as the Jew—a point continually enforced in the Epiphany services. The Epistle warns Christians against two great hindrances to the removal of the leprosy of sin—namely, pride and malice. The two First Lessons are the lv. and lvi. of Isaiah—the former containing invitations of the most encouraging nature to embrace the Gospel, particularly addressed to the Jews, and closing with the description of a great and happy change. The other chapter concludes the subject, and, at the ninth verse, opens a new topic of prophecy, which extends through several chapters.

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL.

This Festival is peculiarly English. No day is set apart to commemorate St. Paul's conversion and labours, by any other branch of the Catholic Church. The Romanist joins St. Peter and St. Paul in one Festival, and that because of a fond error which asserts, without any reasonable proof, that these apostles suffered death on the same day. There is hardly any event in the life of an Apostle, which holds an equal place in the sacred writings with the conversion of the Great Apostle. We have three distinct records of the event by one author in one Book, namely, by St. Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles. The first is the narrative of the event itself, in the ix. chapter; the second is the report of St. Paul's speech to the Jews at Jerusalem, in the xxii. chapter; and the third is in his eloquent address to King Agrippa, in the xxvi. chapter. It is evident that the Spirit

of God intended to impress this wonderful event on our minds, that we may keep it in thankful remembrance, and have a continual sense of the inestimable benefits we have derived from the Apostle's conversion and calling. What sacred writer fills so great a space in the oracles of truth? To whom are we so deeply indebted for clear views of doctrine—for illustrations of Christian practice—for instruction in righteousness—for an example of devoted zeal? It is true that "not many wise, not many noble are called;" but St. Paul was the wisest, the noblest of all whom God hath called to be his messengers of mercy to mankind: none more learned, none better born, none more zealous, none more humble, none more honoured of God in this life. Would we write his epitaph, it would be in the Apostle's own words—"The minister of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by

knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report ; as a deceiver and yet true, as unknown and yet well known, as sorrowful yet alway rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing all things."

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

The Epistle is selected from St. Paul's exhortation to the Christians at Rome to be obedient and submissive to the powers that be. These Christians had generally been Jews, who regarded it as sinful to give tribute to a heathen sovereign, and, therefore, the Apostle considered it necessary to enforce on them the loyalty taught by the Gospel of Christ—a loyalty which

is to be rendered to the First Magistrate of whatever country the Christian may be an inhabitant. "The powers that be are ordained of God," whether they be Heathen or Christian: and, bearing this in mind, the faithful followers of Christ have ever been found the most obedient subjects. The Church of England is peculiarly Catholic in nothing more than this, that she teaches her children the divine right of kings, and the obligation of duty and reverence to all in authority. The Romanist, on the contrary, is taught that all kings are servants of the Church—that the Pope is "supreme," and not the king as St. Peter declares.

The Gospel, like those of the preceding Sundays, presents us with additional testimonies to the mingled divinity and humanity which dwelt in the person of Christ. Here He is represented as a passenger in a small vessel, and overpowered by sleep. Behold the man! one of ourselves, subject to weariness, and requiring repose. But

a great storm arises, and the mariners, accustomed to the dangers of the sea, are alarmed, and, relying no longer on their own skill, have recourse to their sleeping master—"Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm." Behold the God!

The other miracle here recorded was one which proved to the Jews that Christ was superior in power to Satan, by casting out devils,—that He came to destroy the works of the devil—and that the devil's reign was now come to an end. The First Lessons are the lvii. and lviii. of Isaiah, being continuations of the prophecy begun in the ninth verse of the previous chapter, and extending through the lix. It is a striking picture of the sins, miseries, and idolatries of the Jewish people, and a declaration of the fearful judgments with which they were to be visited. All ranks and conditions, priests, nobles, and people are included in the denunciations of the prophet. He describes at great length the

various forms of idolatries and superstitions at this time practised in Judea. The whole of the lviii. chapter is addressed to the Christian Church gathered out of the Gentiles, and it is not improbable that the licentiousness and irreverence of the latter times are depicted in this portion of Scripture.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

The services of the Church have hitherto been of a joyful character; they are now to be subdued to the voice of prayer and penitential supplication. After having led our minds to the contemplation of glorious things in the birth of Christ, and His manifestation as God and man, the Church invites us to think of our own sinfulness and imperfections. The original dignity of man, his fall from it, and the consequent depravity of his whole nature, are now pressed upon our notice; and this with a view to the more devout observance of the

e

approaching season of Lent. Why is this Sunday called Septuagesima? The great fast of Lent having obtained the title of the "Quadragesimal" fast, it was but right to designate the Sundays preceding it by the titles Quinquagesima, Sexagesima, Septuagesima, which describe their number, period, and distance before the First Sunday in Lent. Those who are curious about such matters will find the best account of them in a letter from the Emperor Charlemagne to his tutor, Abbot Alcuin. The later ritualists derive all their information on the origin of these names from the letter of the learned emperor.

The First Lessons for this Sunday are Genesis i. and ii.—portions of sacred writ which relate man's original dignity and the particulars of his mysterious fall into sin. They ought to be too well known to require any commentary in this place. The Epistle is taken from St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, and is introductory to the subject of fasting, which, at this season, is

so conspicuous in the Church's service. It persuades men to this duty, and enjoins that subjection of the body to the spirit, the attainment to which is the best earnest of our ultimate restoration to that glorious estate, both of body and soul, lost in the first Adam and recovered in the second. The Gospel relates the parable of the labourer and the husbandmen, and corresponds with the Epistle in teaching, that all who are admitted into the vineyard of Christ's Church must labour if they would attain the promised reward.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Last Sunday we read of the creation of man, his happiness and glory: to day we see his fall, and learn the origin of all the sin and misery which have come upon the world. But the counteraction of the consequences of the fall commenced with the fall itself. A holy society, the Church, was then framed, which received the first

promise of a deliverer, and which, guided by the Spirit of God, has remained throughout all generations to guide and direct the children of Adam to the restoration of the Paradise they have lost. The history of mankind is only the gradual unfolding of that one promise. That one prophecy (Genesis iii., 15) has assumed such clearness and certainty in the centuries that have succeeded it, that man is assured, in the completed revelation and ordinances of the Church, that all he lost in Adam, he may hope to regain in Christ. Man, created in the first Adam a little lower than the angels, has obtained in the second Adam a more excellent name than they.

The First Evening Lesson relates the great wickedness to which mankind had so rapidly arrived, and the determination of God to destroy the world by flood. But He delayed the execution of the sentence for one hundred and twenty years, during which time Noah was a preacher of

righteousness to a gainsaying and scoffing world. The waters rose and overwhelmed them, leaving one single family to represent the Church of God. The ark of Christ's Church has since been appointed as the only means of preservation—"The like figure whereunto baptism doth even now save us." The Epistle is not to be understood as speaking only of the patience and sufferings of ministers like the devoted Paul: it is selected that we may learn that the Apostle's endurance of hardships is one of the best modes, under the blessing of God, of alleviating the miseries of this mortal life, brought in by Adam's fall. The Gospel relates the parable of the sower, and is chosen for this Sunday, as it tells us the danger there is lest we fall short of the kingdom of heaven by listening to the suggestions of the devil, and refers to the First Morning Lesson in these words, "Then cometh the devil and taketh away the word out of their hearts."

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

The Church, having pointed out, in the Epistles of the two preceding Sundays, the duties of the mortification of the flesh, and of patience in labouring to work out our salvation, selects for this 'day's Epistle the beautiful and well-known eulogium of charity, contained in chapter xiii. of 1 Corinthians, to teach us what the end of those duties is, viz., the attainment of a faith which worketh by love, and a love which is the fulfilling of the law. "Now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three; but the greatest of these is Charity." The Gospel is selected because of our Lord's discourse with his disciples in reference to his approaching sufferings—the contemplation of which is at this season offered to the Church. In connecting our Lord's discourse with the miracle of healing a blind man, we have a lesson taught us that even He, who was about to undertake the mighty work of saving a

lost world, would not refuse to stop in His career of mercy, at the cry of one poor suffering creature. The First Morning Lesson continues the history of the Church after the deluge—the consecration of the earth by Noah's erecting an altar upon it—and the installation of Noah into his office as the second father of all the families of the earth; whilst power is given him to use the animals for food, all cruelty is strictly forbidden. The rainbow is made the sign of a covenant between God and Noah that the human race is no more to be destroyed by a flood; the world and the Church, the good and the bad, are henceforth to live together, until the reign of perfect and universal holiness shall be established. The First Morning Lesson relates how God singled out one powerful chieftain to be the defender of the true faith, the protester against prevailing idolatry, and the receiver of the future revelations of the Divine will. The history of Abraham and his seed becomes the

history of the visible Church of God. There is a two-fold purpose in the selection of these lessons from the Old Testament. The circumstances related in them have a general typical correspondence to the events commemorated in the Christian Church; while the dealings of Jehovah with His Church collectively, illustrate His dealings with each individual believer.

ASH WEDNESDAY.

The soul of man, by reason of its corruption, is averse to the important duty of self-examination, contrition, and repentance. The Church supplies a remedy by appointing one season in every year for these duties. A fast is enjoined, a curtailment of bodily enjoyments is recommended, in order to promote that work, to which, when unassisted by divine grace, the soul of man entertains so manifest a repugnance. The Jews ate the bitter herbs of repentance during the week preceding

the celebration of their annual passover ; the Christian should come up to a much greater feast, by the more earnest observance of the same penitential preparation. In all branches of the One Catholic Church, a fast was observed before Easter, differing in length according to the customs of the different places where the Church was planted. The Apostles began the practice by fasting forty hours before the anniversary of the Resurrection, and gradually the time was extended to forty days. Had the Church of England done away with this ancient observance, she would have departed from the principles on which the Reformation from Popery was made ; as it would have been an unnecessary departure from the customs of her sister Churches. The Psalms used on this day are called the Seven Penitential Psalms. There are no Proper Lessons for Ash Wednesday. The Epistle and Gospel instruct us that outward fasting should be attended with inward contrition ; that not

the abstaining from meats, nor the subduing of the body, but the affliction of the soul, the forsaking of sin—is the fast acceptable to God, and profitable to the salvation of the soul. The greater the disregard by Churchmen of this holy season, the greater is the inconsistency between their own practice and the principles of the pure reformed branch of the Church of which they are baptised members.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT. EMBER WEEK.

The great fast of Lent is ushered in by the fast of the first Ember season.* These fasts were instituted in the fourth century, and served the two-fold purpose of dedicating the first fruits of each season of the year to God, and of praying for a blessing upon all those who might be appointed to any sacred office in the Church. The first

* Ember is derived from the old Saxon word Eombre, signifying *course* or *series*.

of these purposes is now quite forgotten ; and, judging from the practices of too many ministers in our own day, it would seem that the latter purpose is to be forgotten as soon as possible. Those were interesting occasions, when the whole Church of Christ, in every part of the world, performed at one and the same time, the sacred rite of ordination—when every candidate for the ministry could feel that he possessed the prayers of the Universal Church in his behalf. Oh, that we could see the Bishop, as the father of his diocese, surrounded by his elder brethren, in the ministry, inviting all the congregations under his pastoral care, to ask a blessing upon himself, and upon those whom he is about to admit to the diaconate or the priesthood. If we could see the days set apart by the Church for this act of supplication regularly and universally observed—if we could see the Bishop ordaining in the chief church of his province those who are to go out into the dark places of this

land, as messengers of peace to the lost and the erring—then, indeed, might we expect a blessing upon our Zion—then her priests would be decked with righteousness, and her saints sing for joy.

The Epistle is adapted to the Ember season. In the description of the sufferings and patient endurance of St. Paul, it points out the picture of a faithful minister of the Gospel, and, amongst other things, it mentions “fastings.” The Gospel relates our Lord’s mysterious conflict with Satan, the particulars of his temptation, and the manner by which he obtained the victory. There requires no explanation why this should form the subject of this day’s contemplation—our Lord fasted forty days and nights, and we, at this season, imitate His example.

The First Morning Lesson continues the history of the Church, and herein relates the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, on account of their great wickedness. The Church would exhort us to greater diligence.

in the work of repentance, by pointing out the terrible destruction poured out upon those cities—how certainly and surely the judgments of God will at last overtake the impenitent and the sinner.

The First Evening Lesson is selected as uniting with the sentiment and teaching of the Gospel, and appropriate at the beginning of this season of sorrow and mortification. It teaches that, after all our fasting and penitential discipline, the sacrifice and atonement of Christ must be our sole dependence. The history of Abraham affords an example of a firm and steadfast faith amidst severe and bitter temptations, and would persuade us, after his pattern, to prove, at this season, by the strictness of our obedience, the sincerity of our repentance and the greatness of our self-denial.

f

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

The services of this season contain frequent exhortations against fleshly lusts, and give examples from scripture of the sad effects of yielding to their solicitations. The Epistle for this day is to that effect, being St. Paul's admonition to the Thesalonians to preserve their bodies in chastity and pureness, "for God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness."

The First Evening Lesson presents us with an instance of the fatal consequences which too often follow the indulgence of evil passions. A young princess of Israel, not content with the society and amusements of her own people, must needs go amongst strangers and idolators, probably on some day of festivity, or the celebration of a religious spectacle, and falls a prey to the lust of a heathen prince. The end of this disgraceful affair was bloodshed and misery, not to one individual or family,

but to hundreds. Some people object to the reading of this Lesson. But why? Does the Church shut her eyes and ears to the existence of sin of any kind, or in any shape? Does she affect a morbid refinement which would speak and act as if there were no more lust in society—no seducers of female innocence, and no public places where the daughters of Christian parents ought never to be seen without the watchful eye of a parent constantly upon them? No, let us not delude ourselves into a belief that society will ever be so pure and holy as to be able to dispense with any portion of God's word that speaks the language of severe and unvarnished rebuke on such matters.

The Gospel relates the interesting meeting of our Lord and a woman of Syrophenicia, and is selected for this season as it affords a remarkable instance of importunity in prayer. Prayer and fasting are essentially united. To fast merely for fasting's sake is an idle mockery, useless

to ourselves, and fearfully injurious in the example it gives to others. But to fast that we may give ourselves to serious thought, with prayer, is fasting to a right end, and no one will deny its efficacy for such a purpose. Therefore, this fasting season ought to present us with examples of successful prayer, like this in the Gospel.

The First Morning Lesson brings before us a curious part of the history of the Church—the rejection of Esau's line and the adoption of Jacob's, as the channel by which the visible Church is preserved. The selection of this (xxvii.) chapter of Genesis is evidently made with the design that it may agree with the penitential nature of this season. Esau can express sorrow for the consequences of his past transgressions, but he cannot acknowledge his own unworthiness and demerit. He can shed tears, and still continue in wickedness. He raises the exceeding bitter cry of self-reproach, and earnestly begs a revocation of his sentence; while, at the

same time, he plots his brother's murder, and wishes for his father's death. He found no place for repentance, though he sought it with tears. May God give us, not only the sorrow which leads to repentance, but also that true repentance itself which shall be manifest in our renunciation of every known evil, and our patient continuance in well doing !

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

The services of this day are framed in the same spirit as those of the preceding Sunday. The Epistle contains St. Paul's earnest exhortation to the Christians at Ephesus not to fall back into the immoralities and evil practices which had been promoted by their heathen teachers, and which formed the principal part of the solemn rites of their religion. These were performed in darkness, and were so disgraceful that they cannot even be mentioned. But the converts to Christianity had become partakers of the

f 2

light and purity of the Gospel. They were to walk as "children of the light," and have no fellowship with the works of darkness. The fleshly indulgences which were an essential part of heathenism, are utterly condemned by the Gospel. The portion of Scripture appointed for the Gospel contains our Lord's reply to those who accused him of casting out devils through Beelzebub—one of the difficult passages of Holy Writ. The choice of this passage for the Lent Season is evidently because of its showing the danger of falling away into sins of which we have repented. It also describes the state of the Church at the time of our Lord's coming, and the future condition of the Jewish people. Although there was no open idolatry, the Church of the Jews might at this time be said to be empty, swept, and garnished. It was empty of all spiritual religion; it was swept from all avowed wickedness and open sin; it was garnished with the outward profession of being the only true Church, with

pompous worship, splendid sacrifices, and strict observances. This was during our Lord's ministry. Afterwards, the Jewish Church falls into the extremest wickedness, which is called "taking seven other spirits, more wicked than the former." They crucify the Lord of Glory. They commit every kind of crime and cruelty. The last state of that nation is certainly worse than the first: for eighteen centuries they have been a bye-word and a reproach in every country in the world—yea, in Jerusalem itself.

The First Lessons introduce us to the wonderful and deeply interesting history of Joseph, which forms an important link in the chain of the Church's annals, and at the same time present us with an apt commentary (in the Morning Lesson) on the Epistle of the day—"How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God!"

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

The services of Midlent Sunday differ materially in their character from those of the other Sundays in Lent. This has been the case for twelve hundred years, and the reason assigned by ancient ritualists is, that the Church, fearing lest her people should be oppressed by the long continuance of their fasting, desires to offer them, on this Sunday, comfort and refreshment, and to this end she appoints for the Gospel the narrative of our Lord's feeding five thousand men in the wilderness; teaching us, that as Jesus had compassion on the multitude, and relieved their bodily wants, so also is He ready to feed with the spiritual bread of life, and to relieve with the comfort of His heavenly grace, all who hunger after Him and His doctrine. To the like end is the Epistle selected from that part of St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians, wherein he allegorically presents us with

two covenants—the Mosaic and the Christian. The first, as Ishmael and Hagar, came short of the blessing. To the latter, as to Isaac and Sarah, the promises and blessing are secured. The first, the Mosaic dispensation, engendereth to bondage—the bondage of fear—of severe ordinances—of a soul conscious of sin and not finding forgiveness. The second speaketh of pardon—of the freedom of filial obedience in the use of ordinances—freedom from the curse of the law, and sin, and death. By selecting this passage for this day, the Church would refresh us by the assurance that we are children of the promise ; and cheers our pilgrimage by raising our eyes to that “ Jerusalem which is above,” from whence all true satisfaction comes.

The First Lessons proceed with the history of Joseph, and at the same time are selected in harmony with the refreshing and comforting character of this day's meditations. In the Morning Lesson, we

read, in Joseph's forgiveness of his brethren, the merciful compassion of Christ to those who approach Him with humility and repentance. In the Evening Lesson, we read of dearth being changed into plenty—suffering swallowed up of joy. The immediate wants of Jacob's family are supplied, and means are provided for the future increase of the people and the Church of God.

It is not difficult to see that the Church has observed a system of teaching during the last four Sundays. The First Sunday in Lent teaches the duty of fasting; the second, the duty of prayer; the third, that spiritual enemies are cast out by prayer and fasting; the fourth teaches the reward, refreshment, and joy of those who have used rightly the services of the three preceding Sundays.

THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

25th March.

This festival relates rather to the incarnation of our Lord than to his mother. The Church of England holds the middle path between the Romanist and the Dissenter. She neither refuses respect and honour to the Virgin, nor does she pay adoration to her who is not declared to be divine, but only "blessed among women." This was the rule of the early Church. The Virgin cannot hear the prayers of any individual, far less is she the hearer of universal prayer. Let us ever remember the reply of our Lord to one who said, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that thou hast sucked." "Yea; rather blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it."

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

This Sunday is sometimes called "Passion Sunday," as on it the Church begins to contemplate the sufferings of our Lord. It is supposed that on the evening preceding this day the chief Priests and Pharisees took counsel together against Jesus, and said, "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles;" and, upon the advice of Caiaphas, they sought opportunity to arrest him, from which time forth Jesus walked no more openly among them. In accordance with this subject, the Epistle is selected from a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which speaks of the efficacy of Christ's passion, and points out the consequences of it in the abolishing of the old priesthood of the Jews by Him who is the Mediator of a better covenant, and the Priest of a new sacrifice. There is only one way of obtaining remission of sin under the three stages of the one true religion

given by God to man—only one way of pardon to the circumcised Jew, and to the baptised Christian, viz., pleading the merits of that holy Saviour, who, by His own blood, entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. The Gospel relates one of the most striking conversations our Lord ever held while on earth—that wherein He asserts, “Before Abraham was I AM.” There can be no difficulty in seeing that this passage is admirably chosen for this day’s Gospel, for when it is said that the Jews took up stones to cast at Jesus, it is added, “But Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple,” thus instructing the Pharisees that He was about to leave, for ever, the Temple and all other holy Jewish ordinances, because of the pride and hardness of their hearts.

The First Morning Lesson brings us four hundred and thirty years forward in the history of the Church. The family of Jacob, which consisted of only seventy

persons on coming into Egypt, is now increased to thousands. They, who came with only a few waggons, are now possessed of numerous flocks and pasture lands. The time arrives when the Church and people of God were to be removed out of Egypt, and to be translated into the land promised to their fathers. A great and powerful deliverer is raised up in Moses, who, after a discipline of eighty years, is called by Jehovah to be the leader of His people Israel :—he has an interview with God at the scene of the burning bush—and God reveals himself as the Great “I AM.” What an appropriate Lesson for this Sunday, in which we read of the “I AM” of the New Testament !

The Evening Lesson proceeds with this history of the deliverance of Israel. It would seem that to the Church of England belongs the merit of introducing the book of Exodus into the services of this season ; the book of Jeremiah was read by the Western Church.

SIXTH SUNDAY IN LENT.
PALM SUNDAY.

This is the first day of the week, called Holy, Great, or Passion Week. This Sunday is called "Palm Sunday," because on it our Lord made his triumphal entrance into Jerusalem. St. John relates that this day of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem was the fifth day before the Passover. It was, therefore, the tenth day of the first month, and was observed among the Jews as the day on which they brought into their houses that yearly lamb, which they afterwards killed as their Paschal sacrifice on the fourteenth day of the same month, at eventide. Our Lord, therefore, knowing that He was to be slain as the true Paschal Lamb, and desirous to fulfil in His person this custom also, enters to-day, of His own accord, into Jerusalem. The Church of England, rejecting the complicated ceremonies of Rome, retains in her ritual the

sum and substance of the early services appointed for this season.

The Epistle is a comprehensive and sublime passage, speaking of the past, present, and future glory of Christ. No portion of Scripture could be more suitable to the commencement of this holy week's meditations than this, which tells, with comfort and certainty, of the final exaltation, glory, and dominion of Jesus, manifested in that very nature in which, as at this time, He suffered and died. The Gospels contain a narrative of the sufferings of our blessed Lord as written by the Four Evangelists. These Gospels were called "Passions." In the Salisbury Missal, which was the Prayer-book of England before the Reformation, they were read alternately by the priest and choir; but now only by the former. St. Matthew's "Passion" is read in the Second Lesson and Gospel of this day; St. Mark's, on Monday and Tuesday; St. Luke's, on Wednesday and Thursday; and St. John's is

reserved for Good Friday, in honour of his being the beloved disciple, and the only witness of the suffering he records. The First Lessons have no immediate reference to the great subject of the day, but they form an essential part in the history of the Jewish Church, and are introductory to the celebration of the Pass-over. There are Second Lessons for this Sunday. To that of the morning we have already alluded. That of the evening plainly alludes to the sufferings of Christ—" Yet learned He obedience by the things that He suffered,"—and points out the superiority of the ministry with which Christ was invested to that of the Levitical dispensation; and it declares the virtue of that priesthood, in which He offered His own body as the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. On Sunday, our Lord entered Jerusalem amidst the hosannas of the multitude, " and when He beheld the city He wept over it." He goes into the temple, and casts out the buyers and sellers, and

overthrows the tables of the money-changers. In the evening, He retires to Bethany. On Monday, He comes into Jerusalem, and on His way he curses the barren fig tree ; again enters the temple, and again drives out the buyers and sellers : and on this day the chief priests sought to kill Him. On Tuesday, He comes in from Bethany, and observes the withered fig tree ; He publicly rebukes the Chief Priests, Herodians, Sadducees, and Pharisees ; He speaks the parables of the vineyard and the marriage feast, of the wise and the foolish virgins, of the servants and the talents : He foretells the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Jewish Church. On Wednesday, Judas Iscariot enters into a bargain with the High Priests to betray Christ. Thursday is called “ Maundy Thursday,” *Mandati dies*, or the day of the command, “ Do this in remembrance of me.” His disciples prepared the Passover ; our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist ; He retired, after supper, to the Garden of

Gethsemane ; He was betrayed, arrested, and taken to Annas, and by him was sent to Caiaphas, about midnight, and awaited in the hall of his mansion till the early dawn. Whilst there, He is thrice denied by Peter, and insulted by the soldiers and servants. This day has always been observed as one of mercy and good works, especially by Kings and Potentates. The Sovereign of our own country distributes alms at St. James's Palace ; and in some countries the prison doors are thrown open. Friday is called "Good Friday." At break of day, Jesus is taken before the Jewish Sanhedrim, is condemned and sent to the civil magistrate, Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor : by him He is sent to Herod, who occupied a part of the same palace, and who, after arraying Him in a gorgeous robe, sends Him back to the Roman Governor. Pilate, after washing his hands of this innocent blood, delivers Him to the will of the Jews. The soldiers put on Jesus a crown of thorns and a scarlet robe, and

place a reed in His hand : they lead Him to Calvary, and, about twelve o'clock, nail Him to the cross. For three hours, there is darkness over the land, and, after pardoning the penitent thief, Jesus expires, saying, " It is finished." The three hours which intervene before the Jewish Sabbath, are occupied by removing the body from the cross, and laying it in a new tomb. The women who followed it have only time to mark the place and make some preparations for embalming.

EASTER EVEN.

This is part of that most early and general fast of forty hours, in remembrance of the Redeemer's rest in the silence of death. The forty hours are thus explained ; —four hours of Friday, twenty-four hours of Saturday, and twelve of Sunday. The Church of England, holding the truth as it was held by the early Church, sanctifies this day in memory of her Lord's rest from

toil and trouble; and would teach her children that there is a kind of rest of the soul after death, through which there is a passage, after the resurrection, to that life which our Lord Jesus Christ has foreshown by His own rising from the dead. The Epistle is found in the earliest liturgies, and is retained by our Church, because she holds that Christ descended into the abode of disembodied spirits, or Hades. The Gospel simply relates the burial of our Lord.

The First Morning Lesson is from the prophecy of Zechariah, and refers to the humility of our Redeemer; but this chapter is probably selected because of the 11th and 12th verses, which allude to the state of the dead—"that pit wherein is no water"—and the expression "prisoners of hope," seems to describe the Church at this season, waiting for the resurrection.

The Second Lesson is from St. Luke's description of our Lord's entombment.

The First Evening Lesson relates the redemption of the first-born among the Israelites, and the appointment of a feast of seven days in remembrance of the death of the first-born of the Egyptians, and the deliverance of the children of Israel.

The Second Evening Lesson teaches us that, as God rested from His work of creation this day, and as the Redeemer rested from His work of redemption this day, so also there is laid up for the people of God a "rest"; and we are bidden to labour to enter into that rest.

EASTER SUNDAY.

After a long season of penitential silence, the Church breaks forth this morning into strains of rejoicing; and, after the minister says "Praise ye the Lord," the anthem "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," is chanted by all present. The word "Easter" is peculiar to England, and is derived from the name of an Anglo-Saxon

goddess, whose festival was held in spring. The day of our Lord's rising from the dead is the greatest feast of the whole year, and it would require a volume to relate the various modes of its celebration in the different branches of the Church universal. The offices of our own Church need no explanation. They are brief and significant. We would only add our devout wish that all, who rejoice at this season, may be led by reflection and repentance to rejoice with the *spirit*, as well as in the body—that they may be “risen with Christ” and that their affections may be set on things above.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

This Sunday is called in England “Low Sunday,” as if it were a second Easter—a lower commemoration of the solemn feast of the resurrection. This is the first day of the second week after our Lord's rising from the dead, and the second occasion of

His appearing to the eleven apostles. On this day He breathed on them and said, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them." This forms the subject of the Gospel; and the office of the priesthood is this day the prominent object brought before the Church. If there be any day of the year when a minister would teach his people the awful nature of his office, it is to-day. It is now he must magnify that office by pointing out the solemnity of its institution, and he will humbly claim from his flock a pious regard for him, not as a man of ostentatious sanctity or peculiar holiness, but as commissioned by the Great Head of the Church to preach the Gospel, and to administer the Sacraments. The Church of England rejects the Popish doctrine that the priest is the arbitrary judge of the right to absolve a sinner. Keeping the same subject in view, the First Morning Lesson is selected from that part of the Book of Numbers, which relates the

impious presumption of Korah, who denied the sacred authority of the priestly tribe of Levi. The Church hereby teaches us the danger and guilt of intruding into the sacred office of the ministry, without being lawfully appointed to it, and the risk which every one incurs of displeasing God and destroying his own soul, who joins such unauthorised teachers; but, to show how anxiously the Church would have her ministers cultivate an humble and meek spirit along with their lawful authority, she reads a salutary warning to them in the First Evening Lesson. There we learn that a man may be a distinguished prophet of God—a man of eloquence, and in great repute in his generation—and yet, by indulging one engrossing passion, fall from his high estate, and at last perish miserably among the very enemies of God and his Church. The lesson is peculiarly necessary in the present day. Alas! we have to record of late many instances of men, who, by exalting their priestly office, and

h

pluming themselves on their sacred functions, have been permitted to fall into the errors of a superstitious priestcraft, and the strong delusion to believe lies.

“May it please Thee to bring into the way of truth all such as have erred and are deceived: we beseech Thee to hear us, Good Lord!”

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Having directed our attention last Sunday to the institution of the Christian priesthood, the Church now proposes for our imitation the example of our Great High Priest, as set before us in our Lord's own words, “I am the good Shepherd,” and in St. Peter's instructions to the whole body of believers. It would appear from this, that the Church, fearing the attachment and adulation of the people for their ministers, would, on the first opportunity, warn them that Christ alone is to be loved, and revered, and imitated. “The

hireling careth not for the sheep"—but He was no hireling. His motive for active duty and patient ministration was not the vulgar applause of the multitude, but His intense love for sinners. He endured reviling and obloquy, not to gain a name amongst mankind, but because He was meek and lowly in heart; and His ministers never will be recognised as His apostles and servants, till they put away from them the love of power and popularity. In reviewing the history of our many divisions, may we not trace them to the influence of individual preachers? Some one man, entertaining strong opinions and employing popular arts, gathers around him an enthusiastic flock. They see nothing but their minister in connection with his ministrations; the great Head of the Church is kept out of their view; the Church herself is never introduced to their notice; her teaching is concealed or perverted, her usages despised, her ordinances lightly esteemed. A sect is formed. So

is it with another and another congregation, and the One Holy Catholic Church is scattered to the winds, through the pride, the self-sufficiency, and arrogance of a few. Oh ! how different were the means employed by our blessed Lord. How different the effects which followed !

The First Lessons continue the history of the Church ; and at the same time afford us an example of a wicked shepherd in Balaam, and a good priest in Phineas. The passage relating to the latter, in Numbers xxv., is evidently the reason why that chapter is read on this Sunday. He was in some degree a type of our Great High Priest.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The meaning of this day's Services is, in a great measure, lost to us, owing to our having departed from the usages of the early Church during this season. It seems to have been the custom to baptise converts

on Easter Day, and in the following year they commemorated the important event on this Sunday. The Epistle is therefore selected from a portion of St. Peter's writings, wherein he exhorts baptised persons to abstain from fleshly lusts, and to exhibit, in the eyes of the world, a life void of offence towards all men. Being made free, through the Gospel, they were not on that account to be licentious in conduct or opinions; they were to be obedient subjects—fearing God and honouring the King. The Epistle is in unison with the Collect, which is a prayer that we may avoid all things contrary to our profession. The Gospel of this and the four next Sundays is taken from our Lord's last conversation with his disciples, as related by St. John. The arrangement of these Gospels is very beautiful and interesting. To-day our Lord speaks of His return to His Father, "I go unto the Father." The Gospels of the two next Sundays point out the consequences of Christ's return unto the Father—viz.,

that prayers should be available through His intercession—and the sending of the Holy Ghost the Comforter. The First Lessons are taken from the Book of Deuteronomy, which contains the farewell exhortation of Moses. They are all of a practical tendency, and appropriate to the reading of Christ's farewell addresses in the Gospels of this season.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The services of this season are so framed as to show the completeness and harmony of the divine system of redemption, and so to point out the connection between the ascension of Christ into Heaven and the presence of the Spirit with the Church. The Epistle appointed for this Sunday is from the writings of St. James, wherein he alludes to the promises of our Lord, and declares the Holy Spirit to be the best and most perfect gift that cometh from above. The Gospel records our Lord's

gracious promise to the Apostles, that on His departure from them, He would send the Comforter, who should continue with the Church, to guide it in moments of danger—to lead it into truth—to save, sanctify, and cleanse it. Such being the leading topics of this day's meditation, it seems to be a very appropriate Sunday for preaching on the most important privilege and duty of *prayer*. Prayer is not only enjoined by Christ Himself, and enforced by His Apostles, but the descent of the blessed Spirit Himself was made to depend upon the prayers and supplications of the Church. The First Lessons, taken from Deuteronomy, record the directions given by Moses to the Levitical priesthood, and bear some correspondence to the directions and instructions for the constitution, government, and discipline of the Christian Church, given by Christ to His Apostles during the forty days of His occasional appearance on earth after His resurrection.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

This Sunday is called Rogation Sunday, and the three following days are enjoined as fast days. This fast originated in the year 459, at the city of Vienne, in France, which was threatened by an invasion of the Goths, and, at the same time, was visited by a plague of wild beasts: subsequently, it was made a season of prayer for God's blessing upon the produce of the fields. The observance of these days was common in England long before the Reformation, and was retained after that event. By an injunction of Queen Elizabeth, certain Psalms are appointed to be read by the curate of every parish whilst perambulating the boundaries, a custom of long observance, in this week, and still retained in some parts of England. But it is to be feared that noisy troops of children, and parties of convivial wine-bibbers, have taken the place of the sur-

pliced choir chaunting solemn litanies and appropriate psalms. These three fasting days are, however, a most becoming preparation for the due observance of Ascension Day, which is celebrated on the Thursday of this week. The Epistle enforces on us the necessity of God's commandments as the best proof of our sincerity in offering the petitions and supplications of this prayerful season. "Be ye doers of the word." The Gospel is an encouragement to us to offer our prayers to the Father through Him who, having raised His glorified body into the heavens, ever liveth at the right hand of His Father to make intercession for us.

The First Lessons are still taken from Moses' last injunctions to the people of Israel, and are evidently selected with a view to our instruction as to the rule and government of the Church. We are taught to remember how God had conducted and nourished His people in the wilderness, by the manna, by the living water, by the

unwearied feet, and the unworn garment. And so we are to pass through this world, supported by the ministrations of the Church, the bread from Heaven provided in the Holy Eucharist, and the daily renewal of the Spirit, until, by God's blessing, we obtain a fitness for the enjoyment of that higher land of promise—the heavenly Canaan, the New Jerusalem.

ASCENSION DAY, OR HOLY THURSDAY.

This day, the fortieth from the feast of the Resurrection, has, from the earliest times, been set apart as the one solemn day of the anniversary of Christ's ascension into heaven. The Church gives especial honour to this high festival by the appointment of a Proper Sacramental Preface, Proper Psalms, and Proper Lessons. The Epistle and Gospel merely relate the event itself.

The First Morning Lesson is Deuteronomy x., relating the ascension of Moses into the Mount to bring down a new law to the Jewish Church, and is an apt illustration of Christ's ascension into heaven to send down the law of a better covenant upon His Church.

The First Evening Lesson tells us of the Ascension of Elijah. In each of the three dispensations of the one true religion, an Ascension has taken place : Enoch, under the patriarchal; Elijah, under the Levitical; Christ, under the Christian dispensation.

The Second Morning Lesson is St. Luke's account of the last moments of our Lord's bodily presence on earth, and the important discourse He held with the eleven before His departure—His declaration, that all power was given unto Him in heaven and earth, and His command to go forth to all nations and proclaim His religion.

The Second Evening Lesson is St. Paul's observations to the Ephesians, touching the unity of the Church and the consequences

of Christ's ascension — viz., His giving to each member of the Church, according to his functions, the gifts and graces of His Holy Spirit. On His ascension, Christ instituted various offices in the Church for its edification and perfection — apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers. The Proper Psalms are too numerous for our particular notice, and their fitness for the occasion is obvious to every reader.

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION.

This has been called "The Sunday of Expectation," and it must surely have been a day of anxious waiting to the Apostles. In obedience to their Master's command, they were assembled at Jerusalem to wait the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost, and, in company with the Virgin Mary, they continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. The Church, therefore, invites her children on this day to pray that, as on the assembled Apostles,

so also on the present members of His mystical body, He will be pleased to send down the influence of His Holy Spirit to comfort them and to lead them to the same place, whither the glorified Head of the Church has gone before.

In the Epistle, St. Peter assures those to whom he wrote, that, in the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, the power of their bitter persecutors would be destroyed; and he urges them to soberness, watchfulness in prayer, and the practice of hospitality, so needful to the suffering Christians. By the selection of this passage, the Church enforces upon her people the duty of prayer, in contemplating the ascension of Christ, and points out the best mode of obtaining the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, which alone are the fruits of effectual and believing prayer.

The Gospel relates our Lord's promise to send the Comforter to His Church. How remarkable was the ignorance of the Apostles as to the real object of our Lord's

ministry, sufferings, death, and resurrection, when we hear them asking, "Lord, wilt Thou, at this time, restore the kingdom to Israel?" It was left for the Spirit of truth to teach them the hard lesson, that all their expectations of self-aggrandisement and earthly power were to be laid at the footstool of a crucified Redeemer. The Spirit was sent to teach them what to say, when brought before kings for the Word's sake—to support them under the afflictions, hatred, and persecutions of that world which had already rejected their humble and holy Master.

The First Lessons are still taken from Deuteronomy. Many chapters from this book, bearing a great resemblance to each other, are read at this season, enforcing the duty of obedience, and pointing out the guilt and crime of idolatry. It is not improbable that the peculiar circumstances of the Church of England, at the time these Lessons were appointed, caused the peculiar selection of such topics. They

are a standing protest against the image worship and idolatry of Rome, to which so many of our forefathers were still attached at the Reformation ; and they are excellent practical Lessons in that obedience to the commandments of God, which is the best test of faith, and the best pledge of our obtaining the favour and blessing of God.

WHITSUNDAY.

Such is the name given to the Sunday on which the Holy Ghost descended visibly on the Apostles, because it was customary, in olden times, for converts to come for baptism on this day, clothed in white garments. This great festival, which has been celebrated in all ages with peculiar honours, in our Church is distinguished by Proper Lessons, Psalms, and Sacramental Preface, and the appointment of special services for the Monday and Tuesday following.

The Epistle is from that portion of the Acts which relates the great event of the

day. The gifts of the Spirit, at this time imparted to the Church, were of a two-fold character: the miraculous gifts—the speaking with other tongues, the power of raising the sick, and of striking with blindness—and the gift of reading the thoughts of the heart. These have ceased with the circumstances which required them, while the gifts of the Spirit in regeneration by baptism—in the conviction, conversion, and sanctification of the soul—are continued in every age and condition of the Church. That same Holy Spirit which had quickened every pulse, and sanctified every throb of the new created world, and which descended, as on this day, upon the heads of the Apostles, still abides with the Church, to enliven the gloom of the desponding and elevate the piety of the devout—to remove the errors of the deceived—to alleviate the sorrows of the afflicted—to purge away the dross and refine the gold—to lead into all truth—to cleanse, and change, and sanctify. The Gospel

contains our Lord's promise of a Comforter to His disciples, taken from a passage which strongly attests the divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit.

The First Morning Lesson (Deuteronomy xvi. to v. 18) relates the appointment of the feast of weeks, a festival celebrated fifty days after the Passover, in commemoration of the ingathering of the harvest and the giving of the law upon Mount Sinai. This feast is the type of the descent of the Spirit, which was the giving of a new law, to be written by the Spirit of God upon the hearts of men, to be published in all lands, and proclaimed to the ends of the earth. The history of the type is the best lesson which could be selected for that day, which commemorates the anti-type.

The First Evening Lesson (Isaiah xi.) is selected because it contains a description of the graces of the Spirit, in the second verse, as possessed by our Lord. These, poured out in unmeasured fulness upon

Him, are all promised as the portion and heritage of the members of His Church.

The Second Morning Lesson (Acts x., 34) relates the first effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles, in the case of Cornelius, the Centurion. While we magnify the goodness of God in thus calling to Himself the first fruits of the abundant harvest of the Gentile world, we may also reverence that infinite wisdom which, in the first dispersion of the disciples in Judea and Samaria—in the calling of Cornelius—in the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the auditors of St. Peter—gradually led to the general diffusion of His word and the establishment of His Church through the Gentile nations of the earth, by the united labours and zealous exertions of the Apostles and their brethren.

The Second Evening Lesson (Acts xix. to v. 21) records a two-fold instance of the power of the Holy Ghost, in the descent of its miraculous energy on the Ephesian converts, and in the consequent conver-

sion of so many of the most steadfast adherents to the worst practices of magical arts, superstition, and idolatry.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

Having duly commemorated the great events of our Redeemer's Incarnation, Manifestation, Fasting, Temptation, Death, Burial, Resurrection, Ascension, and Sending of the Holy Ghost, the Church closes all these observances with a Festival in honour of the Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity. On this day, we are not to occupy our minds in contemplating the share which any one of the Persons in the Godhead took in our Redemption, but we are to give equal adoration, praise, and thanks to the Father who made, to the Son who redeemed, and the Holy Ghost who sanctifies us; and, at the same time, to acknowledge the essential oneness and unity of the Godhead. The Epistle is taken from that part of the Revelations where

St. John relates the occupations of the spirits of the redeemed, who cease not, day and night, their anthem of praise and thanksgiving, saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come!" This sacred song of the Redeemed implies the solemn mystery of the divine Trinity, and it justly forms the pattern of our continual ascriptions of praise to the same glorious and incomprehensible Godhead. The doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, which is daily acknowledged in the hymns, creeds, and doxologies of the Church, is attested by the voices of angels and the songs of the redeemed. The Scripture appointed for the Gospel has more immediate reference to the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit, and blends very well with the other services of the day, which all combine to throw light upon the mystery commemorated in this Festival.

The First and Second Morning Lessons mutually explain and illustrate each other.

In the one we have the *Elohim*, a name of plural signification, denoting several persons in the Eternal Godhead, preceding a singular verb—"God said let *us* make man," &c. But the doctrine of the Trinity was more fully brought out under the Gospel. The voice of the *Father*, speaking from heaven—the descent of the *Holy Ghost*, like a dove, upon the well-beloved *Son*—prove a distinct, three-fold, plurality of persons in the Essence of the divine Unity. The First Evening Lesson relates the interview between Abraham and three mysterious strangers in the plain of Mamre, among whom was the presence of the Lord Jehovah. The chapter affords evidence to a plurality of persons in the Godhead, by revealing a Divine Being, distinct from the invisible Father, assuming to himself all the attributes of Deity. The Second Evening Lesson is 1 St. John v., wherein we read, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one."

ST. BARNABAS' DAY.

11th June.

This Festival is put nearest to the season of the Ascension and Pentecost, because St. Barnabas was called to be an Apostle by the Church, not like the twelve, nor Matthias, nor Paul, but as one separated by the express command of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of the hands of certain ministers in the Church. The time of his conversion is unknown ; but shortly after the Ascension we find him with the disciples at Jerusalem, and having sold a patrimonial estate in Cyprus, he generously laid the money at the Apostles' feet. He it was who introduced Saul to the Church, and everywhere we find him distinguished by untiring zeal, generosity, and love. But his kindness degenerated into occasional error, and led him to countenance false teaching.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Church, having finished her course of solemn festivals, sets apart the remaining portion of the ecclesiastical year to the inculcation of moral duties and leading men to imitate the example of that Blessed Redeemer, whose sinless life, and wondrous death, and glorious resurrection, they have hitherto contemplated. The Epistles and Gospels of this long season are chosen for the purpose of enforcing the mutual dependence of faith and obedience, principle and practice, doctrines and duties. The former are selected from the Apostles' exhortations to the infant Church, on the subjects of humility, prayer, obedience, chastity, charity, and self-denial. The latter are chosen for the same purpose, from the parables of our Lord, or the narrative of His gracious miracles. The Epistle for this Sunday is aptly chosen from the writings of that most amiable Apostle, St.

John, whose grand object seems to have been to remind Christians that "love is the fulfilling of the law"—a most appropriate introduction to the practical teaching which the Church begins on this day. The Gospel contains the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, which sets before us the everlasting consequences of the want of love to our neighbour—the sad effects of hardheartedness and inhumanity. This is the immediate lesson to be learnt from this striking parable; but it is rich in warning and admonition on many other points. It tells us of two states, between which is fixed the gulf of an eternal separation; and instructs us in the solemn and awful truth that a careless, self-indulgent life is sufficient, without any loss of reputation among men, to exclude us from the happiness of the one, and to entail on us the misery of the other.

The First Lessons are taken from the Book of Joshua, chapters x. and xxiii., being a return to the history of the

Israelites, which was interrupted by the Whitsunday services. The reading of the subjugation of the Canaanites by the armies of Israel should encourage the members of Christ's Church in their warfare with the enemies of their salvation, the world, the flesh, and the devil. The contest may be long, and the enemies mighty, but He who enabled Israel to conquer is still able and willing to impart strength, assistance, and victory.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The subject of brotherly love, which was presented to our notice last Sunday, is again enforced upon us by the Epistle selected from St. John, whose divine character reflected, in a peculiar manner, the graces of gentleness, charity, and love. Brotherly love, arising from a lively consciousness of the mercy of God, has ever been the distinguishing mark of the true man of God from the beginning of the

k

world, while the unrighteous man has ever entertained the same evil principle which ruled in Cain, and which, if unrestrained by human laws, would lead to the same fatal and cruel results.

The Gospel is a parable of our Lord's, in which He represents the history of the Jewish nation during His residence among them. The privilege of the Church and Gospel of God are represented under the name of a great supper. The "certain man" is Christ: those first bidden are the Jews, who, because they despised the mercy of God, are expelled from their great privileges. The "servants" sent out into the streets and lanes are the Apostles. Commanded to go to the Gentiles, they compel the heathen nations to receive the Gospel, and to enter, by baptism, into the Church of God. The guests at this feast shall continue to increase, until the mansions of this house are co-extensive with the nations of this world, and until "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

The First Morning Lesson contains an interesting part of the Jewish history. It appears that, after Joshua's death, there was a short interregnum, which threw the nation into great disorder and, eventually, led to the grossest idolatry. The lately conquered nations rose against their invaders, and we find Moab, Mesopotamia, Canaan, Midian, Philistia, and Edom reducing Israel to cruel bondage. But God heard their complaints, and men were raised up to work out their deliverance. The conquests of Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, and Gideon prove the willingness of God to exert His power in behalf of His people. But the most cruel oppression was that of Jabin, King of Canaan, which lasted twenty years, and whose army was commanded by Sisera, an active and vigilant oppressor. Such was the reduced state of Israel, that only ten thousand men, of all the tribes, could be gathered to make an effort at emancipation, under Barak, a man of Naphtali, encouraged by the declaration

of Deborah, a prophetess, that God was with him. The hosts of Canaan are defeated, and Sisera flees for shelter to the tent of one whom he believes to be his friend; there, by the hands of a woman, he is assassinated, and the Israelites are rescued from their worst enemy. The lesson intended to be gathered from this narrative is the certain reward of obedience to the commands of God.

The First Evening Lesson is Deborah's song of victory, a spirited composition, full of poetry, eloquence of language, and fervour of piety.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Epistle contains an exhortation to humility, taken from the writings of St. Peter, who had been a remarkable instance of self-confidence, and who, through the pride of his own power to resist temptation, denied his Master. Pride was the cause of the fall of man, and still continues

to be the besetting sin of the human race ; and it was reserved for the religion of Christ to conquer it. No true Christian will be a proud man. He cannot forget the sinfulness which required the sacrifice of Christ ; and the contemplation of the example of a meek and gentle Saviour will never be absent from his mind when tempted to think highly of himself. The Gospel presents us with two short, but highly encouraging parables, wherein we learn that the Saviour came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Twice in this passage does our Lord declare that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth—an affecting view of the love of glorified spirits for the souls of men, and an intimation that they are deeply concerned in the extension of the Kingdom of Grace upon earth.

The First Lessons introduce us to the interesting history of Samuel. That for the morning contains the song of his mother Hannah, a poem filled with elevated

sentiments and fervid devotion, but chiefly noted for its prediction of the Saviour's kingdom, when as yet there was no king in Israel. This is the first occasion on which we find Him spoken of as Messiah and The Anointed. The Evening Lesson contains the call of Samuel by a voice from heaven, and affords us the most delightful view of his character at a time when the Jewish Church was sunk in the lowest corruption. With Samuel there begins a new school of prophets and teachers, and, for ages, it sent forth good and eminent men. The Lessons of this Sunday are full of practical teaching to parents and children. In Hannah, we have the example of the blessedness of praying for children—in Samuel, the advantages of early piety. And who can read the narrative of old Eli's griefs without being affected by the view it gives of the consequences of indulging children and sparing rebuke. The character of Eli's sons is fraught with warning, too, for the ministers of religion. Let us not

lord it over God's heritage, but be ensamples to the flock of which He has made us overseers.

ST. PETER'S DAY.

29th June.

The Gospel is that portion of Scripture upon which the Roman Church founds her doctrine of St. Peter's supremacy over the Church of Christ on earth, and which supremacy, it says, is inherent in the Bishop of Rome. The true Catholic Church interprets the words, "On this Rock I will build my Church," to mean nothing more than the confession St. Peter had just made—"Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." The rock of this confession of faith in the human and divine nature of Christ was to be the foundation on which the whole superstructure of the Church would be built. The power of the keys (as it is called), given to St. Peter in this passage, is given, on other occasions, in the same

words, to the other Apostles. With regard to St. Peter's supremacy, it may be well to mention, that even the fact of his having been Bishop of Rome is strongly denied by many ancient writers—indeed there is no decided proof that he ever was in Rome at all. St. Paul was, in all respects, much more likely to be the head of the Roman Church than St. Peter; as he boldly rebuked Peter, wrote an epistle to the Romans, declared their faith to be openly spoken of throughout the world, and resided in Rome two years, in his own hired house. Gregory I., Bishop of Rome in the sixth century, declares that the title of Universal Bishop was a false, blasphemous, and wicked title; and that the Universal Bishop would be Antichrist. The Church of Rome is ancient, but not her errors; and the Church of England has not departed from her in this, or any other subject, where she has not first departed from herself.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Nothing is so apt to discourage and hinder us in our Christian course as the temporal evils and sufferings of this present life. While, therefore, the Collect of the day teaches us to pray unto God, that, He “being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal;” the Epistle of the day supports us under the pressure of present sufferings, by the expectation, not only of a speedy relief, but of an eternal reward after them. It declares that this state of things is not always to continue. The whole creation, made corruptible by man, shall be made incorruptible with man. There is to be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. The whole creation, which groaneth in pain, while man is subject to the bondage of corruption, shall be caused to rejoice when he is admitted to the

glorious liberty of the children of God. If the whole creation groans for a deliverance from their miseries, brought upon them by sin, of which, by a natural instinct, they have some hope and expectation, how much more should the believer (who has an earnest of the certainty of that future deliverance of both soul and body from the dominion of evil in the first fruits of the Spirit) desire both the future redemption and resurrection of his body, and patiently endure afflictions, in the joy and confidence engendered by that hope? Sufferings, affliction, and sorrow are the lot of our human condition. The motives here recorded by the apostle, the hope of future deliverance, the looking forward to an eternal reward, and the remembrance that all creation is involved in the same affliction, should move us to patience under sufferings of every kind. The Gospel enforces mercifulness, both declaring the duty, and giving the measure of its performance. “Be ye merciful, even as

your Father in Heaven is merciful." It harmonises with the collect of the day, because it teaches us so to dispose of our temporal things, that we lose not finally the heavenly things. The great lesson to be derived from it is the avoidance of the hypocrisy of severely condemning our neighbours for those very faults, of which we are ourselves guilty. The mote is anything that is dry and light, as a straw or little splinter of wood. The beam is a large thick piece of wood, easily seen. The one represents a small, trivial, venial offence ; the other some flagrant and great sin. The natural heart is given to a spirit of detraction. This may arise either from envy, which cannot bear the lustre of another's merits, or from a hope, by condemning the faults of others, of being thought better than they ; and often it is the case that hypocrisy is united with detraction, and the man who finds fault with the actions of his neighbour is himself guilty of deeds more unprincipled and

heinous. The true Christian will extenuate the faults, and throw a veil of charity over the failings of his neighbour, and if he ever judge any one severely, it will be himself.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Among the many proofs of the divinity of the Christian religion, there is one which is seldom thought of, namely, that its Founder foretold His disciples that they would be persecuted for righteousness' sake. Now this was a new and very improbable case. Who could have supposed that silent virtue and good actions should bring upon men hatred and injury? But so it is. A godly man, in all circumstances, in every age, and in every country, is evil spoken of and misinterpreted. The Epistle for this Sunday is an exhortation in reference to this subject, and points out the best alleviation from suffering inflicted by the hatred and persecution of the

ungodly—the happiness of being called upon to endure afflictions for the Lord's sake. The Gospel relates the miraculous draught of fishes,—a miracle which alludes to the outward and visible Church; and declares, in the multitude of fishes inclosed in the net, the number of converts which should be admitted into the Church at some future day, by the labours and preaching of the Apostle St. Peter.

In the First Morning Lesson (1 Samuel xv.) we are presented with an important and profitable portion of Saul's history. He had been directed to destroy the Amalekites and spare them not; but he reserved Agag, the captive king, to decorate his own triumph, and permitted the people to seize upon the spoil and enrich themselves with the booty of the conquered. This act of disobedience is visited with the displeasure of God, and is declared to be rebellion and ingratitude against Him at the very moment when He has crowned them with success. Samuel pronounces

Saul's condemnation ; and, ordering Agag to be brought before him, he hews him in pieces before the Lord. We are taught by this lesson that disobedience is rebellion, and that "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

The Evening Lesson brings us to an important crisis in the history of the Israelites. When the immense army of the Philistines was in the field against them, and the whole chivalry of the two nations was assembled to decide the fate of both, a mere youth, with his single arm, with a stone and a sling, discomfits the power of Philistia—a youth raised up by God to be a deliverer of His people Israel, to be a restorer of religion, a reformer of abuses, an example of penitence and piety—a prophet of Messiah—an ancestor of Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of Christ.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER
TRINITY.

The subject which more especially engages our attention on this day is the evil of unnecessary anger, against which we are exhorted by our Lord Himself in the Gospel. On every occasion He endeavoured to remove the corrupt explanations which the Pharisees gave of the moral law, and He vindicated its entire supremacy over the passions of men. The expressions used in this passage seem to require elucidation, for want of which they are very likely to provoke dispute and doubting. It seems strange that Christ should declare that, "whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire:" He did not, however, mean this in its literal sense. "Danger of hell fire," in the exact translation of the words, is, "liable to the Gehenna of fire." Gehenna was the name given to a place, near Jerusalem, where the Jews burnt bones,

dead animals, and other refuse, and the people employed in this loathsome occupation were the lowest creatures of the city, outcasts and disreputable persons. Our Lord here says, that if a man indulges a habit of treating his fellow-men with insolence and contempt, he is in danger of sinking to the lowest condition, and being put out of society.

The Epistle is the same portion of Scripture which is read as the Second Lesson on Easter morning, and represents the character of our most holy religion as not only controlling the actions, but restraining the thoughts of men; it not only forbids hatred, malice, and uncharitableness, but enjoins and supplies the most powerful motives for brotherly affection and good will. The Christian admitted by baptism into the body of Christ's Church, has promised to die unto sin and live unto righteousness in all his members, in controlling his tongue, restraining his hands, and keeping watch on his feet. He has

promised to glorify God both in his soul and body, which are His.

The First Lessons are replete with interest and practical instruction. The history of David affords a remarkable instance of God's purposes being brought about by the most natural order of events. David, on the conquest of Goliah, after a short interval, marries the daughter of Saul, and he was thus brought into connection with the throne; his courage made him popular with the army; his success rendered him a favourite with the people; his zeal for God's service attached him to the priests. These things might naturally account for his promotion to the kingdom,—but it was fore-ordained of God, and expressly prophesied by Samuel. Without enlarging on the painful narrative in connection with the Morning Lesson, two things may be observed; first, man's ignorance of the temporal punishment attached by God to the commission of sins, even after the guilt of

those sins is pardoned ; the other, is the duty of pious submission to the will of God under the chastisement of bodily sufferings, the loss of friends, and the sorrows of bereavement.

FEAST OF ST. JAMES THE APOSTLE.

26th July.

This Apostle was the son of Zebedee and Mary, the cousin of the Blessed Virgin, and is called St. James the Great, to distinguish him from St. James, the son of Cleophas, and nephew of Joseph, the husband of the Virgin. St. James united, at his calling, the zeal of the new convert with the affection of the kinsman, in leaving his ship, and his aged father, and all that he had, to follow Christ. He was present at the resurrection of Jairus' daughter, at the Transfiguration, and during the agony in the garden ; but we have little recorded respecting his peculiar disposition or personal history. He and his

brother John were surnamed by our Lord, Boanerges, or sons of thunder, and the traditions of the Church intimate that he was a man of singular fortitude and zeal. He fell a victim to the hatred of Herod Agrippa, and had the melancholy pre-eminence of being the first martyr among the apostles. It is related in history that one of his principal accusers, repenting of what he had done, became Christian and was put to death along with him. The Church proposes St. James' example to our imitation, in the readiness with which he followed Christ, forsaking everything that he had. So may we, forsaking all worldly and carnal affections, evermore be ready to follow God's holy commandments.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Morning Lesson affords an example of the mode in which the will of God was made known under the Levitical dispensation. David inquires of the Lord the

reason of a famine, which had now continued three years, and he is told that it was in consequence of the breach of the oath of a preceding sovereign, and his cruel treatment of a portion of his subjects. It seems, that when the Israelites invaded Canaan, they granted terms of alliance and amity to the Gibeonites, who continued in peaceable possession of their lands, and gradually received the laws and institutions of their conquerors. They were employed about the sanctuary as hewers of wood and drawers of water ; but when Saul destroyed their city, Nob, he slew them and their priests. Saul and his sons were now dead, but this crime had still to be expiated, and vengeance fell on Saul's descendants. The wrath of the Gibeonites—the acquiescence of the king in their demand—the pathetic tenderness of Rizpah—the honour paid by David to the remains of Saul and his children—are all circumstances illustrative of the customs of that age, and require a knowledge of

Eastern manners to be properly understood. We arrive now at the crowning victory of David over the Philistines, and the establishment of his power over the various nations of Canaan, from the shores of the Mediterranean to the banks of the Euphrates.

The Evening Lesson relates David's return in peace to his capital; and in a moment of pride his commanding a census of the people to be made. God visits this act with a three days' pestilence, and seventy thousand people perish. David, bowed down with repentance, entreats the Lord in behalf of his people. The threshing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite, is purchased; sacrifices are made; and God is appeased. This threshing-floor was never afterwards used for a secular purpose—it became the site of Solomon's temple! David's fall on this occasion may urge the necessity of vigilance and prayer to counteract the craft and subtilty of the devil working against us, while his

rising again furnishes an abundant source of consolation to all returning penitents not to despair of the riches of Divine mercy, from a sense of their own unworthiness and manifold demerits.

We have made no remarks on the Gospel or Epistle, as they have been already noticed; the former on the Fourth Sunday in Lent, and the latter on Easter Sunday.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Collect of the day prays that God will put away from us all hurtful things, and give us all things profitable to our salvation. The Epistle points out the works of the flesh, as those things which may hurt us, and shows, in the blessings of adoption, those things which may profit us; while the Gospel unites in pointing out the dreadful consequence entailed upon an indulgence in evil.

The Morning Lesson (1 Kings xiii.) is a portion of the history of Israel, after the division of the nation by the revolt of the ten tribes. The men of Israel, now rivals of the men of Judah, set up Jeroboam for King, and he, the better to establish his power, institutes a religion in opposition to the divine institutions of Moses. He closely imitated the law of Moses, but corrupted the divinely-founded discipline of the Levitical economy by ordaining ministers who were not of the tribe of Levi. He established a schism, and that schism ended in idolatry. Jeroboam is never afterwards spoken of in Holy Scripture excepting as guilty of a most grievous offence—"Jeroboam, son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." Hence we learn that it is a sin to worship God in any way that He has not instituted; and Jeroboam's punishment was signal and exemplary. The same chapter contains an impressive narrative respecting a man of God who disobeyed a divine command—a singular

history, fitted to teach the Christian reader that knowledge is not always grace, and that he who reproves others may himself be in danger of falling into grievous sin.

The Evening Lesson introduces us to the prophet Elijah. He lived in the reign of Ahab, the ninth in succession from Jeroboam, and the most abandoned of men. In spite of Ahab's rage, Jezebel's cruelties, the murmurs of the people, and combinations of the priests, Elijah boldly vindicated the honour of God, and announced His judgments on the land—that there should be no rain nor dew, for three years. The interposition of God preserves Elijah from persecution and the famine which visited the land. The fowls of the air—the brook—the Gentile widow—the barrel of meal and the cruise of oil—are all well known to us as wonderful instances of God's special and miraculous care of His saints.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Epistle contains a caution to Christians that they avoid the example of unbelief, given us in the history of those Israelites who perished in the wilderness and came short of the Promised Land. Heirs of the rich valleys of Canaan, they did all eat that spiritual meat, and all drink of that spiritual rock, that followed them, yet many were cut off and destroyed. So there are thousands baptised into Christ, made partakers of all the privileges of God's children, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, yet fail, through wickedness, infidelity of heart, and corrupt doctrine, to attain the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls. To God alone can we look for "the spirit to think, and do always such things as be rightful"—and in connection with this sentiment in the Collect, we have our Lord's parable of the unjust steward in the Gospel of the

m

day. The example of this man is commended, not for his injustice and rapacity, but that Christians may be as diligent and solicitous in their spiritual concerns, as worldly men are in promoting their temporal interests. "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness"—make your worldly advantages, your wealth or your rank, the means of forwarding your personal holiness, and promoting the glory of God; and so they will assist your entrance into everlasting habitations.

The Morning Lesson relates the issue of a controversy between Elijah and the priests of Baal, which had the effect of restoring the worship of the true God, and undermining the influence of Jezebel. It teaches us the miserable tendency of the people of God to run into departures from the true faith, and to set up idols of their own devising. They had been educated in the right faith, and they nominally continued to worship God; but they would institute

new forms of worship, and a new priesthood. So amongst ourselves there is no open disavowal of Christ—there is no national rejection of Christianity—but multitudes refuse to walk in the old paths of obedience and duty, and choose new teachers, and encourage one another in erroneous views of divine truth.

The Evening Lesson affords us an example of the weakness and frailty of man, in the conduct of Elijah, who so lately distinguished himself for zeal and fidelity. He who lately rebuked a monarch on his throne, and challenged in controversy a united hierarchy, is now found flying before the threats of a worthless woman. His spirit fails; his faith gives way; he sinks under the difficulties that surround him. But God does not desert him; and, after signal marks of encouragement, the prophet applies himself with fresh energy to the task assigned him. He anoints his successor in the ministry, and prepares for his translation.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Among the variety of subjects suggested for our consideration by this day's services, *prayer* seems to be the chief. The Collect is a petition to God that He would hear us when we pray, and direct us to ask for things agreeable to His will; and the Gospel points out where our prayers are to be offered—in the house of God: "My house shall be called the house of prayer." These words of our Lord were uttered at the conclusion of His ministry, in the last week of His human life, and they are treasured up by every true lover of the sanctuary, and every one who rightly appreciates the value of public and common prayer. And may it not be said in our day that the house of God has been made, like the temple at Jerusalem, "a den of thieves?" Is it not true that multitudes go there professedly to honour God, but actually to deprive Him of the honour due

unto His name, and to give it to the preacher? Are we not a sermon-hunting people—a people of itching ears—rather than a people of prayers and sacraments? And this is mistaken for religion! This is called *the love of the truth*! Alas! that the truth should be so misunderstood; and that, if it *were* the truth, it should produce such miserable fruits. The Church of England has never countenanced a love of preaching, but she continually sets before her people the duty and advantages of prayer. She has appointed *daily* prayers throughout the year, but only *one sermon* in the week, unless some holiday occur during it.

The Epistle is a portion of scripture which is read on Whit Monday also, and on this day it seems to have a reference to the Evening Lesson (1 Kings, xxii.,) wherein mention is made, in a remarkable manner, of the Spirit of the Lord—and lying spirits.

The two First Lessons are parts of the

m 2

history of Ahab and Jezebel. That of the morning relates a fearful instance of Ahab's tyranny and mean-spirited conduct, aided by his unprincipled wife, the end of which was the sentence of degradation and death to both, by the voice of Elijah.

The Evening Lesson relates the accomplishment of Ahab's destruction, and the fulfilment of the word of the Lord—that in the very place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs should lick the blood of Ahab.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Collect has a reference to the Gospel, Epistle, and First Morning Lesson. The first part, which addresses God as the dispenser of "mercy and pity," refers to the mercy displayed in the case of St. Paul, who, though a persecutor of the Church, "obtained mercy" to become a preacher of

the Gospel ; a grace of God not bestowed upon him in vain—as we read in the Epistle. The expressions, “running the way of thy commandments,” and “be made partakers of thy heavenly treasure,” allude to the conduct of Gehazi, the wicked servant of Elisha, who ran after Naaman, with a lie upon his lips, to obtain the talent of silver and the change of garments. The allusion to the Gospel is, in the case of the publican, whose prayer was for “mercy”—“God be merciful to me a sinner.” And *prayer* is again the subject prominently put forward for the Church’s consideration this day. Last Sunday, we were directed to the “House of prayer”—to-day, we are instructed as to the proper spirit and sincerity which ought to regulate all prayer, but especially prayer in the sanctuary. The admonition of our Lord was addressed to the Pharisees, who, for a pretence, made long prayers, and, under an affectation of superior piety, concealed a life of irreligion, immorality, and vice. The

Publicans were peculiarly the objects of public aversion, as the tax-gatherers of the Roman government; and our Lord gave importance to the lesson of His parable, by introducing one of them as the man who went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee, because he prayed in humble earnestness, confessing his sins.

The First Morning Lesson (2 Kings, v.) relates to the miraculous cure of Naaman, chief captain of the host of Benhadad, King of Syria. This event is fraught with instruction to the Christian, as it teaches the value of the ordinances, institutions, and sacraments of the Church, appointed by its Divine Head. The waters of Abana and Pharpar had no healing excellence, while the streams of the Jordan effected the cure of Naaman. The washing of regeneration in baptism—the daily renewal of the Holy Ghost—the partaking of the Holy Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, are the appointed and undoubted channels of the grace of God to man.

The leprosy of the human heart will only then be done away, when the soul is so humbled as to be willing to seek salvation in the use of the ordinances appointed by Christ Himself.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY.

24th August.

The Apostles of our Lord were not always poor in station, low in rank, and selected from the dregs of the people. St. Bartholomew, who is generally supposed to be Nathanael, was probably a man of wealth and reputation among his countrymen. Convinced by certain evidences and some proofs of Christ's miraculous powers, he acknowledged Him to be the Messiah. From the peaceful retirement of domestic life, Bartholomew went forth to the arduous work of an Evangelist, and sealed with his blood the truth of his doctrine and the sincerity of his faith. He was flayed alive, and then crucified. We may learn from

his history, that a quiet and unvaried life—the lot of most men—is not always an unblessed life. We may learn to live without excitement in religious matters, and find that there is room for the exercise of Christian virtues in the right discharge of daily duties and in the quiet path of social occupations.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The services of this Sunday are intended to enforce the duty of prayer; and the Epistle, in which St. Paul ascribes all his sufficiency to God, is intended, by the Church, to teach the necessity of asking for daily grace in prayer, especially for those who are engaged in the office of the ministry. The narrative contained in the Gospel is illustrative of the Epistle. The latter mentions the apostles and their successors being made able ministers of the New Testament, and that the ministration

of the law was inferior to the ministration of the Spirit. For in the times of the law, it was only prophesied "That the ears of the deaf should be opened, and the tongue of the dumb should sing" (Isaiah xxxv.); but, under the Spirit, the prophecy is fulfilled. By the deaf and dumb may be understood, those who are unwilling to hear the word of God, and those who will not open their mouths to shew forth His praise. They who bring them to Christ, and beseech Him to put His hands upon them, are the preachers of His gospel, who, by the charge of the ministry committed to them, bring the deaf and dumb to Christ, to the hearing of His word, and to the utterance of His praise.

The First Lessons seem to speak so forcibly for themselves, that any comment on them is unnecessary. By selecting these chapters to be read, the Church desires to enforce upon her people the solemn truth, that the same providence of God, which visited on the kingdom of

Israel national apostasy with national suffering, still continues to attach national glory or national disaster to the steadfast adherence to the one true religion.

The Morning Lesson records the final extirpation of Ahab's posterity, by the hands of Jehu—the purpose for which he was anointed king by Elisha's messenger.

The Evening Lesson brings us to the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, who reigned one hundred and sixty years after the events related in the Morning Lesson. He was a good king, but being reduced to the greatest straits by Sennacherib, he gave him the silver and gold of the Lord's house as a peace offering. Another invasion of Sennacherib is related in this chapter; but, between these events, Hezekiah was visited by sickness—a circumstance related in a subsequent chapter; and the destruction of Sennacherib is reserved for the next Sunday's services.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER
TRINITY.

This Sunday has been called by some old ritualists "The Sunday of Promises," from the subject of the Epistle being the promises made to Abraham, and fulfilled in Christ. The Collect is a prayer that we may not forfeit these promises through a faithless service of God. The portion of Scripture appointed for the Gospel is explanatory of the subject of the Epistle. It is our Lord's parable of the Good Samaritan, to which there is given by Churchmen a beautiful interpretation. The man who fell among the thieves is Adam, who fell from Paradise into the world, and was stripped, by Satan and his angels, of his righteousness and glory. The priest and the Levite, who passed by on the other side, represent the ceremonial law, which had no power to heal or to take away the guilt of sin. The Good Samaritan is our blessed

n

Lord, who, according to the divine promises, repairs our lost innocency, and binds up the wounds of sin. The wine poured into the sufferer's wounds is the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin ; the oil is the power of the Holy Ghost, which healeth our infirmities, and restores in us what Satan has destroyed. The inn is the Church, which is open to all men ; the host represents the ministers of Christ, to whom, while the master is absent, are committed the Holy Scriptures and other means of grace, to guide the people entrusted to their care. In reference to the Epistle, the priest and the Levite, passing by on the other side, bear testimony to the declaration of St. Paul, " by the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified."

The First Lessons continue the history of good King Hezekiah, and introduce us to another excellent prince, Josiah. In the former, we have an example of that faith which renders a man acceptable before God. When all Hezekiah's resources were

exhausted, his treasures spent, his armies thinned, he did not despair, but, entering into the Sanctuary, sought by prayer to be yet stronger in faith, and was able to tell his people—"Be not afraid; there be more with us than with our enemy." And not in vain had he trusted. The host of Assyria is, in one night, slain by the Angel of the Lord—one hundred and eight-five thousand corpses attest the presence of a foe in Judah. The history of Josiah is an example that the goodness of a king will not protect a nation from the vengeance of God for their national sins.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Epistle is a part of St. Paul's exhortation to the Galatians, that they should "walk" in the Spirit as well as "live" in the Spirit—that they should prove they were justified, by no longer yielding to the temptations of the flesh. A contrast is

also given between the works of the Spirit and the works of the flesh ; that every man may see whether he is led by the Spirit or is still under the law : whether in a state of acceptance or condemnation. “ They that *are* Christ’s ”—not they who *profess* and *call* themselves Christians—“ have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” The exceeding precious promises made to us in our baptism are not to be secured by a nominal faith, but by the continual “ *increase* of faith, hope, and charity,” which is the object of the petition in the Collect. These sentiments and doctrines are illustrated by the Gospel, which is the narrative of our Lord’s interview with the ten lepers. Here we are taught what saving faith is. The words, “ Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole,” which were addressed to one of the party, are applicable to the whole. Saving faith is a religious belief in our own weakness and in Christ’s power to heal, leading to a religious principle of

hope, and prayer, and exertion, ending in the religious practice of holiness and obedience. In the Scriptures, we find faith sometimes described as the motive, sometimes as the works which follow the motive. But every instance of saving faith recorded in the Scriptures unites faith, prayer, and obedience—and thus, too, we reconcile the apparent inconsistencies of St. Paul and St. James.

The First Lessons are from the prophecies of Jeremiah, who assisted in the reforms of good king Josiah, and saw the fulfilment of his own predictions in the punishment of Zedekiah, and the miseries consequent on the first and second invasions of Nebuchadrezzar. At the time of the Babylonish captivity, Jeremiah declined the royal invitation to reside at the capital, preferring to take refuge in Egypt along with many of his countrymen; and there, it is understood, he perished in a tumult of the Jews at the city of Tahpanhes.

The Morning Lesson clearly describes

the Babylonish captivity. The falsehoods of the prophets, the tyranny of the priests, the oppressions and vices of the wealthy, the perjuries and ingratitude of the people, are declared to be the cause of their ruin.

The Evening Lesson foretells the fate of three monarchs of Judah: Shallum, or Jehoahaz, who died in captivity; Jehoiakim, who rebelled against the Chaldeans, and was slain in a sally beyond the gates of Jerusalem, and whose body never was buried; and Coniah, who continued the war after his father's death, and was taken prisoner by Nebuchadrezzar, in whose hands he remained till his death. As was prophesied, none of Coniah's family ever ascended the throne of Judah.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Epistle (Galatians vi. 11.) teaches us that no external rites, however excellent in themselves, can avail anything to render a

Christian man justified before God. Nothing can be effectual to the securing this blessing but the new creation of the heart, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Some of the Galatian converts to Christianity had been required by the Jews to continue in the observance of Mosaic ceremonies ; and St. Paul's object, in this passage, is to teach them that "neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision." In connexion with this subject is the Gospel of the day, wherein our Lord declares that "no man can serve two masters." The object of those Judaizing teachers, in Galatia, was not to show any superior attachment to the law of Moses, but to avoid persecution from the world—to stand well with both parties, Jews and Christians. So in our duty to God there must be no divided obedience between God and Mammon. We must serve either the one or the other ; but the service of both is altogether incompatible. The same instruction is taught

in the First Morning Lesson, which treats of the obedience of the Rechabites, and contrasts their obedience to an earthly parent with the disobedience of the Jews to their Heavenly Father. We are told that Rechab's motive, in desiring his children not to drink wine or plant vineyards, was not to please God, by leading a temperate life, but only, as we read in the 7th verse, "that they might live many days in the land where they were strangers"—another instance of attempting to serve God and Mammon, by making a virtue of a worldly policy. The First Evening Lesson relates the contempt of Jehoiakim, King of Judah, for the warning of Jeremiah, and his sacrilegious act of burning the written roll of the prophet. For these sins Jehoiakim came to a miserable end at the hands of Nebuchadrezzar; and the inhabitants were included in his condemnation, ten years afterwards, in the destruction of the temple under Zedekiah.

ST. MATTHEW'S DAY.

21st September.

This Evangelist had been a tax-gatherer, and, like his brother officers, had amassed some wealth ; but at the call of Christ he rose from the receipt of custom and followed him. This is the principal trait in his character, and the Collect is a prayer for grace that we, forsaking covetous desires and the love of riches, may follow the same Saviour, with the same alacrity. There is little certainty about St. Matthew's later history ; but he is said to have preached in Ethiopia, and been murdered at the city of Nadabber.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER
TRINITY.

There is no very obvious connection between the different parts of this day's services. The Epistle contains St. Paul's prayerful wish on behalf of the Ephesians, that God would grant them grace to walk

worthy of their vocation, and be partakers, not only of all the outward privileges of the new dispensation, but that they might be filled with the fulness of God. "The love of Christ" is one of the particular objects for which the Apostle prays; and truly this is the grand object for which every minister ought to pray, when commending his flock to the favour of the Great Head of the Church.

The Gospel is the raising of the widow's son to life—a passage of Scripture appointed for this Sunday in reference to the autumnal season, which is frequently one of sickness and death; and, by the falling leaf and shortening days, ought to lead us to think upon the frailty and shortness of our life. In reference to the Epistle, our Lord's compassion for the weeping widow did for her "exceeding abundantly above all that she asked or thought." She only wept—she said nothing—she never once *thought*, far less did she *ask*, that her son would be restored to her.

The First Morning Lesson is Ezekiel ii., which is introductory to the design of the prophet's message, and prepares us for the chapters we are about to read for several Sundays. Ezekiel was contemporary with Jeremiah, and delivered his messages among the captives in Chaldea, whilst Jeremiah prophesied in Jerusalem. Little is known of his history, and nothing of his end. A messenger of sufferings — the burden of his prophecy is well described in the last verse: "There was written therein lamentations, and weeping, and woe."

The Evening Lesson (Ezekiel xiii.), is spoken against the false prophets and prophetesses, who had arisen between the first invasion and the final destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar. As Ezekiel compares the deceitful practices of the false prophets to daubing a wall, so he represents the artifices of these female seducers, by sewing pillows under their hearer's elbows, meaning thereby that they

might sit at ease and be comfortable in their evil ways, and, by covering their faces with veils or kerchiefs, (women's ornaments,) keep them in blinded ignorance.

ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS.

29th September.

This day is set apart for meditation on the nature, employment, obedience, and services of Angels—those holy beings who were created sinless and perfect, and of whom some, without being tempted, fell from their first estate, and are visited with endless punishment. Those who kept their first estate are represented in Scripture as being interested in the welfare of God's people. They shouted with joy at the creation—they desire to look into the things of man's redemption—they sang "glory to God, peace on earth, and good-will to men," when Christ was born—they ministered to Him in His

temptation, and strengthened Him when His soul was sorrowful unto death—they proclaimed His resurrection, “He is risen!” and when He shall return to earth it will be “with all the holy angels.” We do not *pray* to angels, but we contemplate their obedience; and we pray to God that, as they do His will in Heaven, we may do it in earth with the same alacrity. The services of this day are very interesting, and the Scriptures admirably selected.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Gospel and Epistle unite in setting before us some of those good works which form the subject of our prayers in the Collect for this Sunday. The chief duty prescribed in the Epistle is the endeavour “to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” This unity is often illustrated in Scripture by the union existing between the members and the body. As

o

all the members of the natural body, though many, form but one man, so all Christians are united into one mystical body, the Church, in which they are joined by one Spirit, called, therefore, the unity of the Spirit. This is to be kept in the bond of peace, by the one fellowship, discipline, and communion, which serve to join all the parts and members of Christ's body, as a band is wont to tie and fasten things together. St. Paul urges many reasons to recommend this practice of unity. He declares that there is "one body" (that is, the Catholic Church) containing the two sacraments, the Word of God, and an order of ministers; there is "one Spirit" giving life and vigour to all the members; "one hope" of everlasting life; "one Lord," the Mediator, on whose shoulders the government of the Church is placed; "one faith," in the atonement for the sins of men, and in the influence of the Holy Spirit for renewing a corrupt nature; "one baptism," in the name of the

Trinity, the washing of regeneration; "one God," the Creator of all, Jews and Gentiles—the one object of their united worship. The sacred duty of unity has long been violated; and the Church, which Christ purchased by His blood, is rent asunder into every possible variety of disunion, and presenting every shade of opinion. Let us pray for the peace of Jerusalem! Seeing that we are members of the original Church, founded by Christ Himself, and built by the Apostles and Evangelists, let us hold fast our inestimable privileges, and, whilst we earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, let us seek to be more closely knit together in love, and present a beautiful example to mankind of true unity in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life! The Dissenter, by departing from the ancient polity, discipline, and ritual, sanctioned by the use of all lands for fifteen hundred years, has broken the bond of peace. The Romanist, by introducing doctrines un-

known to the Catholic Church, and contrary to the Scriptures, has departed from the unity of the Spirit. The Jewish Church was *protestant* against two classes of errors—those who would *take from* the faith entrusted to her keeping, and those who would *add to* it. The Sadducees would take from the truths of religion by denying the doctrines of the resurrection and affirming there was no unseen world—there were no angels or spirits. The Pharisees made void the Word of God by their traditions, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

The Gospel for this Sunday contains our Lord's vindication of the moral law from the doctrines of the Pharisees—reproves their luxury, pride, and selfishness, and inculcates, on the guests at a Pharisee's house, the lesson of humility and meekness.

The First Lessons are selected from the second division of Ezekiel's prophecies, relating the judgments denounced

against false prophets, and foretelling the miseries threatened against the Jewish people.

In the Evening Lesson, God vindicates His justice to the wicked and the righteous, and the prophet earnestly invites all to inward purity and holiness, and to seek that new heart which is equally the privilege of Jew and Christian.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

It appears, on looking into the origin of the various Sunday services of the Church, that this was considered "*a vacant Sunday*;" that is, one without special services. It was supposed that this Sunday generally came next after the Ember days of this season, when it was the invariable practice of bishops to hold their ordination of ministers, and this they did on the Saturday, following it up with a service on Sunday, borrowed from some previous

festival. But, afterwards, a fixed service was appointed to the Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity, having reference to the Ember season. The Epistle records the joy of St. Paul at the conversion of the Corinthian converts, and his gratitude to Almighty God, who had been pleased to pour such a measure of grace upon them that they came behind other Christian Churches in no spiritual gift. Here the Church's design is to teach persons, lately called to the ministry, the necessity of their seeking the grace and gifts of the Holy Spirit for the right discharge of the duties of their sacred office. The Gospel relates a conversation between our Lord and the Pharisees, in which they asked Him, which was the great commandment of the law?—a question much in agitation at that time. Some held it to be the law of sacrifices—others, the law of circumcision, or the Sabbath, or purification. But our Lord declares that the whole moral and religious code consisted in the

love of God and of our neighbour. Having answered this question, our Lord asks the Pharisees another. Whose son is Christ? They answered, the son of David. He then reminds them that David, referring to the Messiah, calls him "Lord," ascribing titles to him which implied divinity. The Pharisees were unable to answer. They seem to have been unable to comprehend the mingled humanity and divinity of Christ. It is the Churchman's privilege to know Christ as David's Lord and David's Son. And this is a principal theme in the preaching of the Gospel. Therefore is this passage chosen to teach the minister, newly ordained, not to be faithless and unbelieving, as these Pharisees were; and that, like our Lord, he should always be ready to give a reason of the hope that is in him, to answer the unbelieving, and to convince the gain-saying.

The First Morning Lesson (Ezekiel xx.,) relates to circumstances which occurred

in the seventh year of Ezekiel's captivity in Babylon, and in which Zedekiah revolted against Nebuchadnezzar. Certain elders of Israel came to the Prophet to inquire the will of the Lord as to Zedekiah's success. The answer of the Lord is, I will not be inquired of by you at all. The chapter concludes with a prophecy of the burning of Jerusalem.

The Evening Lesson contains, in the first part, a prophecy delivered on the banks of the Euphrates on the very day Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem, B.C. 591. The destruction of the city is typified under the emblem of a boiling pot. In the other part of the chapter, Ezekiel is made a sign to the Jews, in his refraining from the usual demonstrations of grief at the loss of his wife. By this conduct the Jews were to learn that no signs of sorrow could sufficiently express the calamities coming upon Israel.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER
TRINITY.

The Gospel and Epistle for this Sunday mutually explain each other. The former (Matthew ix. 1—5.) relates our Lord's cure of the palsy in proof of His divine power to heal diseases and to forgive sins. The paralytic could not move without a divine power enabling him to do so; neither can the man alienated from God take any step towards the recovery of God's favour, unless he be led to do so by the influence of the Holy Spirit. In the Epistle, St. Paul exhorts the Ephesians (iv. 17) to seek to be thus changed: "Put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind." The Collect is in harmony with these precepts, which acknowledges that without God we are unable to please Him; beseeching Him mercifully to grant that His Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts.

The Morning Lesson (Daniel iii.) relates the wonderful constancy of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the companions of Daniel, who were cast into a fiery furnace because they would not worship Nebuchadnezzar's golden idol. By their wonderful deliverance in the sight of an assembled court and people, the might of Jehovah was displayed, and the proud monarch convinced that he was but an instrument in God's hands to inflict punishment on His rebellious people; and the captive Jews were likewise encouraged to trust in Him who was able and willing to restore them to their native land.

The Evening Lesson is the well-known sixth chapter of Daniel, containing the prophet's miraculous deliverance from the den of lions. Daniel seems to have been raised up by God to bear testimony to Him, and to ameliorate the condition of his captive countrymen during the successive reigns of Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-merodach, Belshazzar, and

Darius, and to witness their restoration in the reign of Cyrus, the Persian. It is probable that the miracle here recorded was afterwards the cause of Cyrus sending back the Jews to their own land. But it is believed that Daniel was too old to accompany them, and remained to assist Cyrus with his counsels until his death at Babylon, or Susa, at a very great age.

FEAST OF ST. LUKE.

18th October.

St. Luke was born at Antioch, in Asia, a city famous for learning. He was converted by St. Paul during his residence in that city, and, from being a physician of the body, became a physician of souls—a peculiar friend of St. Paul, and an Evangelist of the Gentiles. In his Gospel he relates many minute and interesting events connected with our Lord's early life : he has given us the sacred songs of the Virgin, Zacharias, and Simeon, so highly prized by

the Church ; and we are indebted to him for the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Fig Tree, the Prodigal Son, the Unjust Steward, the Rich Man and Lazarus, &c. St. Luke was also the author of the Acts of the Apostles, a most valuable book, and written with beautiful fidelity. He was an eye-witness of many of the events he relates, and begins in the 20th chapter to use the word "we" in his narrative of the events which befel the great Apostle. On the death of St. Paul, he is said to have preached the Gospel in Greece, or Gaul, but some doubt exists as to the precise scene of his labours. There seems to be no dispute as to the fact of St. Luke's martyrdom, and that he was hung on an olive tree instead of a cross. St. Paul highly commends his "beloved physician," and calls him "the brother whose praise is in the Gospel."

The Epistle (2 Timothy iv. 5.) mentions that when St. Paul is "ready to be offered," Luke is still with him,

though Demas had forsaken him, having loved this present world. The Gospel (Luke x. 1—7) is chosen in reference to an opinion entertained by some that St. Luke was one of the seventy Apostles here mentioned.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

From a very early period, it has been customary for the Church to read the Lessons at this season from the minor prophets. They are not called “minor” because of any inferiority in the subject or style of their prophecies, but because of their brevity. They are twelve in number, and occupy a space of nearly five hundred years, down to Malachi, who lived three hundred and ninety-seven years before Christ.

The Morning Lesson to-day is from Joel, whose commission was confined to the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, during

p

the reign of Uzziah. He points out, in striking language, the miseries with which the land was to be visited, and calls upon the people to repent with fasting and prayer. The chapter concludes with a prophecy of the general effusion of the Holy Spirit and the destruction of the holy city Jerusalem. The Evening Lesson is from Micah, who lived in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, and was contemporary with Isaiah, Joel, Hosea, and Amos. This sixth chapter is supposed to be a kind of dialogue between the Lord and His people. In the first five verses, God upbraids the people for their ingratitude; in the sixth and seventh, they deprecate His anger, by the offer of costly sacrifices; and in the eighth, the prophet declares that the true way to please God is to practise virtue. The keeping the statutes of Omri, and the ways of the house of Ahab, are described as the causes of their unsuccessful undertakings and national trials.

The Epistle (Ephesians v., 15-21,) is an advice to Christians not to walk after the example of the heathen, or the rest of the world, in a recklessness of the value of time, in dissipation, and ungodly amusements. Ephesus was noted for the celebration of pagan festivals, the mysteries of Bacchus, &c., and the Apostle was anxious that the Christians should not be partakers in these things—hurtful both to body and mind—to be kept from which is the prayer of the Collect.

The Gospel (Matthew xxii., 1-14,) contains a parable of the kingdom of Heaven—the outward and visible Church. It foreshadowed to the Jews the rejection of their nation, the rending of the veil of the temple, and the calling in of the Gentiles to the riches of the Gospel. The wedding garment is spiritual religion—faith in the Son of God, leading to a sincere obedience—the justification of the sinner through the merits of a Saviour, and his sanctification through the Holy Spirit.

ST. SIMON AND ST. JUDE.

28th October.

These apostles were brothers, and are understood to have been relations of the husband of the Virgin, through a former wife. St. Simon was of the sect called the Zealots—a party violently supporting the law, and not scrupulous in the means they employed. His conversion was, therefore, the more remarkable, and must be classed with that of Matthew and Paul. St. Jude, called Thaddeus or Lebbeus, to distinguish him from the traitor Judas, is celebrated as the author of an epistle, and was the disciple to whom our Lord addressed the consolatory promise, in John xiv., 23. After the dispersion of the disciples from Jerusalem, little is known of the labours of St. Simon and St. Jude, but it is generally believed that they preached the Gospel in Persia, and, having strenuously protested against the superstitions of the

Magi, were, through their instrumentality, put to death on the same day. As these saints were brethren in blood, in faith, in apostleship, and in death, so the Church, by blending their memories together on this day, would press upon us the beauty of unity in love, and in contending for the "faith once delivered to the saints."

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The First Morning Lesson (Habakkuk ii.) points out the punishment due to the pride of the victors of Jerusalem, and to their false confidence in their idol deities. The woes mentioned in this chapter allude to the miserable fate in store for Babylon. The prophet concludes with an earnest prayer, in which he enumerates the past mercies of God, and offers the prayer of faith for a speedy deliverance of His people. The First Evening Lesson is Proverbs i., and, from this Book, the Lessons continue

to be taken to the end of the Ecclesiastical year. Our Reformers made this arrangement from the consideration that the Book of Proverbs was calculated to promote the chief design of the Church's teaching at this season, namely, the inculcation of moral duties, the bringing forth the fruits of obedience, and the practice of holiness of life. The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Songs of Solomon are all that remain of him "whose songs were a thousand and five, and who spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall."

The Epistle (Ephesians vi., 10—20,) is the description of the Christian armour, consisting of six parts: truth and duty, peace and faith, the hope of salvation, and the use of the Word of God. The Gospel (John iv., 46—54,) relates our Lord's second miracle in Galilee. In the first, He rejoiced the guests at a wedding by turning water into wine; on the second, He gladdened a father's heart by

restoring the health of his child. The first was a miracle among the poor, the other was among the rich. Thus the fame of His power was spread abroad among all ranks.

FEAST OF ALL SAINTS.

1st November.

This Festival, falling on a Sunday, will render that Sunday peculiarly rich with varied Lessons to be brought before the Church. This is the last Festival in the year, and is admirably adapted to close the magnificent array of commemorative days. The Church of Rome declares that the saints offer prayers to God for man. The Dissenter considers himself a solitary being, and derides the idea of a holy communion, in which either angels or spirits are interested or united with Himself. The Church of England, consistent with Catholic antiquity, forbids prayers to the dead, yet contemplates, as one mystical

body of Christ, those who have entered into the eternal rest and those who are still striving to enter in. We believe in the communion of saints, and we pray for grace "So to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of the heavenly kingdom."

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Epistle (Phillipians i., 3—11.) illustrates, in a very beautiful manner, the connection that ought to subsist between a minister and his people. On the one hand, we have the sympathy of the converts, with the distresses and trials of St. Paul, their desire to alleviate his wants, and readiness to relieve his necessities; on the other hand, we have the Apostle's joy in thinking of his children, the fervour of his love for them, and his earnest prayer in their behalf. He desires that their mutual love to each other and their common love

to God, may increase with their knowledge of His perfections and their spiritual sense of His truth ; and that they may increase in righteousness unto the praise and glory of God. The Gospel inculcates a corresponding lesson of mutual love, in our Lord's parable of the Rich Man and his Debtor (Matthew xviii., 21—35), wherein we are told of an unmerciful servant who, unmindful of large benefits lately received from his master, cruelly beats a fellow-servant who owed him a trifling sum ; the moral of which is, that a sense of mercies, bestowed on us by God, should lead us to show mercy to our neighbour. The promise of the forgiveness of our own sins, made by God, should persuade us to forgive those who injure, and pardon those who evil intreat us. This is one of the great practical lessons which the services of the Church, at this season, are intended to enforce ; and it forms an important part of that heavenly wisdom which Christianity was appointed to teach mankind.

Why are such practical subjects so little introduced into the pulpit? During the twenty-five Sundays after Trinity there are ample opportunities for preachers to teach the simple, but most neglected lessons of universal love to the brethren.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

As we approach the termination of the Ecclesiastical year, we find more frequent allusions to an eternal state and a preparation for it in the Church's teaching. Last Sunday, the Epistle was an exhortation to sincerity and godliness, "till the day of Christ;" and on this Sunday, the language of the Epistle (Philippians iii., 17-21,) is to the same effect, with a direct declaration of the blessed doctrine of the resurrection of the body. St. Paul, in all his Epistles, alludes only once to the day of his death; but he continually mentions, with exultation and joy, his hopes of the

speedy coming of the Lord Jesus. And such is the continual hope and expectation of the Church, death does not form the subject of her teaching at any period of the year. So the Epistle for this Sunday, passing by the event of the believer's death, speaks to him as already a citizen of Heaven: "Our conversation *is* in Heaven." That is his home, and for that his "vile body" shall be prepared and made "glorious," like unto Christ's. Looking for such things, the Apostle entreats the Church at Philippi to follow his example and that of other ministers (Epaphroditus and Timothy) in a constant perseverance in well-doing. The Churchman may, at first sight, be at a loss to discern the purpose for which the Gospel (Matthew xxii., 15—22) is selected at this season, but ritualists state that it is for the purpose of declaring the difference between the spiritual kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of this world. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things

that are God's." The Church of God, though forming a spiritual kingdom, and existing in opposition to the world, yet ought to be obedient to the civil power in all things not contrary to the revealed word of God. The Church is a spiritual kingdom, deriving authority from no human power, and conferring on its subjects great and inestimable privileges. It is the Church militant—ever fighting against the world for the attainment of its divine ends, even the salvation of sinners and the edification of her own subjects ; yet it may remain at peace with the civil power, whether democratic or monarchical. A Christian people would be sinful in refusing to associate their legislative power with their spiritual privileges as subjects of Christ. And it would be sinful in the Church, as Christ's spiritual kingdom, to allow herself to be so fettered by her connection with the civil power, as to render her incapable of exercising the authority given her by her

Almighty King. Christianity has most flourished, and its sacred principles been best maintained, when the Church and the State have been so blended together that neither has intruded into the functions of the other; when the State has been hal-
lowed by the sanctuary of the Church, and the Church been protected and nourished by the State.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

This is the last Sunday of the Ecclesiastical year, and its services sound the keynote to the Advent season. The Epistle is selected from the writings of Jeremiah, who plainly foretold the twofold nature of Christ. He who was man, as the branch of David, was also a king, and to be called by a name expressive of his divine power and glory, "The Lord our Righteousness." The final restoration of the House of

Judah, and the glories of the Church consequent upon the second coming of our Lord, are also described. Past deliverances are spoken of as typical of those greater victories which await the people of God. The Gospel (John vi., 5—14) relates the miracle of feeding the five thousand, and is read to-day, for the third time during the year. On this occasion it is chosen because of the declaration of the Jews contained in it, "This is of a truth that Prophet which should come into the world." Thus the Epistle and Gospel enforce both miracle and prophecy, as the two great sources of evidence by which it is proved that Jesus is the Messiah. The Epistle bears testimony to the divinity of Jesus; the Gospel to his manhood: and this twofold character of our Lord forms the key to the Catholic system—the guide to the Churchman's year, and the object developed in the Book of Common Prayer. Our Lord appeared in the threefold character of Prophet, Priest, and King, and

the services of the Church are intended to exhibit its divine head in this character. From Advent to Passion-tide, the life of Christ, as the human prophet, is contemplated. Good Friday celebrates the sacrifice of Him who was both victim and priest, who once offered up Himself to bear the sins of many. From Easter to Trinity Sunday, we have Christ in His kingly character, triumphing over the grave, and exalted to the right hand of the Father, in power and great glory. The remaining period of the year is devoted to the contemplation of Christ as our instructor.

And now, reader, farewell! “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” The Church has brought you to the last Sunday in the shining circle of her sacred celebrations. As the pilgrim in life has to pass through the vicissitudes of storm and sunshine, of summer and winter, so the Zion-ward traveller is led, by the hands of the Church, through alternate

seasons of sorrow and humiliation, of rejoicing and festivity, until his prayers are lost in praises ; and the song of the Church militant, " Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world," is exchanged for the song of the Church triumphant—" Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Amen and Amen.

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

“THEREFORE, MY BRETHREN DEARLY BELOVED AND LONGED FOR, MY JOY AND CROWN, SO STAND FAST IN THE LORD, MY DEARLY BELOVED.”—
Philippians, iv. 1.

IN the character, writings, and ministrations of Saint Paul, we have a noble testimony to that grand scriptural truth, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” What a short interval elapsed from the time that he was a blasphemer of the Cross, till he became its principal champion! How complete was the change that passed over him, transferring all his affections, and remodelling all the powers of his understanding.

By far the most touching proofs of the apostle’s being “renewed in the spirit of his mind,” are to be found in the tenderness

B

of his affection for all who had obtained like precious faith with himself—in the warmth of his solicitude for their spiritual welfare, and in the mental pain which it evidently cost him to reprove a backsliding member of the Church.

The text is one of those passages which opens to us the heart of this faithful servant of God, and largely displays his ministerial affection for his favorite Philippians. We cannot doubt that they were worthy of it; for the same Almighty grace which had made Paul what he was towards the Philippians—gentle as “a nurse that cherisheth her children”—had made them “a peculiar people, to shew forth the praises of Him who had called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

Let us endeavour to make a profitable consideration of this passage, with a view to the instruction it is fitted to give both to the ministers and people of every Christian Church. And, first, we shall consider the meaning of these expressions of

the apostle: "*My brethren dearly beloved, longed for, my joy and crown*"; and then we shall reflect on the advice he gives them: "*So stand fast in the Lord.*"

I. The apostle calls these Philippians "Brethren." He might well, indeed, have called them "his children"; because, although they might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet they had not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus he had begotten them "through the Gospel." But in that spirit of unity and love which drew him closely to them, and united them together by endearments of the highest kind, he addresses them as his *brethren*. And might we not justly expect that this should be the feeling with which all Christians, of every age and every stature in the Divine life, should be regarded, not only by those who "watch for their souls as they that must give an account," but by all who have tasted the heavenly gift, and embraced the blessed hope of ever-

lasting life in Christ Jesus? Might it not be expected that all who are animated by the same Divine encouragement, who tread the same path, and rely on the grace of the same Saviour, and look for the same rewards, should be drawn to each other by ties far stronger and holier than all the ties of the closest earthly relationship? Might we not expect, that they who had escaped one common fate, and had their hearts touched by the sense of the same glorious deliverance, and been all included in the same mighty design of God's love, would be constrained to one common sentiment of brotherly affection—an affection so strong that everything would be made to give way for its preservation? Alas! my friends, where is that sympathy for each other's concerns; that tender interest in each other's welfare; that zeal for each other's spiritual state, which ought to testify to the reality of our engrafting into "the true Vine"? Can we stand the test of that saying of Saint John, "We know

that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren"?

My hearers, ye who are the living stones in the Temple of God, let me remind you that this brotherly affection has its first beginning in the Saviour's love to you. "He is not ashamed to call you brethren." Bound together in him, all your wants are known, all your necessities estimated, all your cares cared for: the love of God the Father is engaged on behalf of his Son, and all who are brethren in Him. He instructs them in the way of life, and makes them wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus. He chastens them when they err from His way, and brings them back by "cords of a man" and "bands of love." He guides them by His counsel; He sanctifies them by His grace; He upholds them by His free Spirit; He makes them more than conquerors over sin, in His Son; and, when this mortal life is ended, He brings them to the rest that remains for the people of God. Surely

the partakers of such rich blessings ought to be members one of another. Surely there ought to be a holy zeal and rivalry in God's service; a desire to glorify Him in their bodies and their spirits, which are His; one presiding feeling in their minds, into which all others are resolved—the feeling of gracious love, to the whole, and every part; to God, to Christ, and to each other.

We see that in Saint Paul this blessed spirit was ardently and unceasingly cultivated. In addition to the name of Brethren, he calls the Philippians “Dearly beloved.” Thus he expresses the pleasure he took in them, and the warmth of his affection for them. Such expressions our Church has put into the mouth of her minister when he addresses his flock. When he prays and beseeches them to join with him in confessing their manifold sins and wickedness, he calls them “Dearly beloved brethren.” When he invites them to come to the table of the Lord, he uses

the same affectionate terms; and in the administration of that solemn ordinance, he speaks to them as his “Dearly beloved *in the Lord*.” In the use of such words we have “well said all that we have spoken—Oh! that there was such a heart in us.” What minister can use them without an inward smiting of the conscience that his love and his labours are sadly disproportioned to such terms of endearment? How little has he cared to realize this brotherly affection for the souls over which God hath placed him: how often has he consulted his own feelings and convenience in preference to the feelings and necessities of his people: how often has he preferred to “lord it over God’s heritage” rather than be a fellow-helper to their joy. How many wretched trifles has he allowed to interfere with his first and last obligations to win souls unto Christ, “giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed.”

But Paul does more than call the

Philippians his "dearly beloved;" they were "longed for." And here he only repeats the assurance which he had before given—"God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." After you all; the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the weak believer as well as the strong, the babes as well as the aged men in Christ. He longed to see them again; to have the evidence of his own senses that they really were what he had every reason to believe they were—to behold their order and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ. He longed after them as he did for the Romans, "that he might impart some spiritual gift, to the end that they might be established." He was indeed separated from them and many of his dearest brethren: he was now in Rome, a prisoner, knowing not what should befall him. His solitary hours were cheered by thinking of the distant Churches planted by his hand; and when he took up the pen to write to them, one by one their

names and features would come to mind, with the varied acts of kindness he had experienced at their hands—for they had “sent once and again unto his necessity.” These remembrances touched the heart of the aged apostle; and we can forgive the wish that would have carried him away from bonds and imprisonments to be once more the companion of the “saints in Christ Jesus, which were at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.” Oh! blessed influence of Christian love, which flourishes in every soil, and sheds its sweetness over every scene: which fills with happy recollections the saddest hours of despondency, and overleaps the distance that lies between the yearning heart and the objects of its holiest affections.

Again, the Philippians were the apostle’s “joy.” He had a thousand springs of joy within his heart, because hid in Christ and communicated by him. But these Philippians were external sources of happiness. For them he had watched, and had prayed

unto God. To them he had preached the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the Lord had "opened their hearts that they should attend to the things spoken to them by Paul." He had seen them turn from dead works to serve the living God, and quickened from their death in trespasses and sins. There had been joy in Heaven over them in the hour of their repentance and faith in Christ; and was it not for Paul, who had been sent for the defence of the Gospel and the honour of the Saviour, to rejoice over them too? They were "rejoicing with joy unspeakable, and full of glory:" and was he who had given them the key-note of their gladness not to share in their song? He was glad because of them, as men brought, with himself, into the hands of the everlasting Gospel, and he had a right to say, in the language of St. John, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth."

He says, yet again, that they were his "*crown*." And, dear brethren, what is a

minister's hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not his people, in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? "For ye are our glory and our joy." And has not the Holy Spirit testified of the Church, "Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God,"—each individual being nothing in himself, but a coronet of brightness in the Saviour. The Philippians were "the seals of Paul's apostleship in the Lord." He trusted that they should own him as their Father in Christ, in that day when he and they should have the crown of righteousness which God, the righteous Judge, will give them. He anticipated the time when both ministers and people shall cast their crowns before the Lamb's throne, and ascribe the whole blessing and honour of their salvation and his own to Him that sitteth thereon.

And, dear brethren, does it not well become those who are the travail of the

Redeemer's soul, to glory in each other, and count every saint in Christ an honour and ornament to themselves? The glory of the Church is its Head, and every new member added to it is a new diadem for that Head, radiant as it is, and shall be, with many a crown; and therefore is a glory reflected back upon the members of the Church, just as in an earthly kingdom every new province added to it reflects dignity upon the empire, and upon every subject within it.

II. Let us now attend to the advice which the apostle gives to the Philippians who were so dear unto him, even to "stand fast in the Lord." The words are few, but weighty. The advice was equal in its importance to the tenderness with which it was offered. It implied what Paul well knew to be true—that the Philippians were already established in the truth of the Gospel—that they were already built upon that chief corner-stone, elect, precious;

other than which no man can lay, which is Jesus Christ. The advice of the apostle was given to men who must have had a sense of their own unworthiness, and discovered the worthiness of the Saviour: they had made the blessed discovery that "Christ is all and in all," and that the weakest and most imperfect member of His body is "complete in Him." Surely it is a peace, and a joy, and a rich reward to ministerial solicitude, when a pastor can bid "the flock of Christ, of which the Holy Ghost has made him overseer," "stand fast" in the faith once delivered to the Saints: if he can say—"As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith." And bitter indeed must be the reflections of him who can only tell of alienations, and falling off, and scattering of the flock, on whom "the fear of man" has brought the dreadful snare of hiding the blood of Christ from His perishing people, and pointing to every

hope but the only hope whereby a sinner can be saved.

The subject before us suggests to ministers very solemn considerations ; and the language of the apostle must awaken misgivings in the heart of the most faithful pastors and preachers. With an awful sense of our responsibility to God and the Church, we would now ask of you, Christian brethren, “ Do ye stand fast in the Lord ? ” Does your spiritual life derive its existence from the faith of the Son of God, who loved you and gave himself for you ? Are you depending on Him and dwelling in Him ? It may be that with the fullest intentions to be partakers of all the grace that is in Christ Jesus, you have only reached the outer circle of his attractions—tasted only the stream, but never drunk at the fountain-head. Nay, more, you may be so satisfied with the low and deadened love of your present religious life that you have a positive distaste for anything higher and holier. Satisfied with

“a name to live,” and the formalities of a decent religion, you are unwilling, it may be, to engage in the realities of Christ’s Church—you shrink from a nearer approach to himself—and fancy yourself secure, in a false position. It would be vain to say to you “stand fast in the Lord,” for this is not a true description of your state. The life and soul of your religion is somewhere else than in the Saviour. You have yet to receive Him in all His offices for your salvation; His blood by faith as your atonement; His righteousness as your completeness; Himself as your sanctification; His holiness as your holiness; His cause as your cause; His cross as your glory.

They, dear Brethren, who are thus rooted in Him shall “stand fast” indeed, and because this we wish above all things, “even your perfection,” that ye may be perfect and entire in all the will of God. “Stand fast” on the only rock of safety—on His might, whose strength is made perfect in

weakness. Stand fast by the indwelling of his grace,—by faith in his perfect work,—for this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith. Stand fast in love to Him who loved you, and washed you from your sins in his own blood. Stand fast in the liberty of the Gospel and be not entangled in the yoke of bondage to any opinions merely human. Oh, beware (and this warning is equally needful for the preacher as well as the hearer), beware lest you be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ! “Watch you; stand fast in the faith; quit you, like men; be strong.” “Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” Remember how, elsewhere, the Apostle cries, as if it were the very existence of his ministerial comfort,—“Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.” When the hearts of God’s ministers are failing them—when without are fightings and within are fears—let us find comfort and courage in your

bold and uncompromising walk with God. When others are giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, let the hearts of Christ's ministers be cheered by the firmness and fervour of his faithful people. When "the love of many is waxing cold through abounding iniquity," let us trim our lamps, that they may more brightly burn, and so shine before men that they may glorify our Father which is in Heaven. Yes, there is a large demand upon God's people to maintain the honour of the Gospel; to prove to the world that Christ's service is perfect freedom, and his precepts the joy of his people's hearts. We call upon every true believer to take his part in holding forth the Word of Life, by a walk and conversation becoming the Gospel. So shall we "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." We call upon the experienced Christian to set an example to the young, of an open and manful profession: I say to the young, because the times in which we live are full of

danger to the youthful Christian, and many a stumbling-block is cast in his way. God forbid that our halting, our coldness, our unwillingness to take up the cross, our departure from the mind that was in Christ, should cause any one with his face towards Sion, to turn back and walk no more with us.

To the youthful members of the flock, there is an urgent call to stand fast. Ye who own allegiance to the Saviour, and know experimentally how dearly he hath purchased a title to your love, "stand fast in the Lord and in the power of his might." You have many a foe arrayed against you—yea, more than the world, the flesh, and the Devil—you are called to contend for your very existence, as children of God. Everywhere snares are laid for you. Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. Would you be saved in the day of adversity? Lean not on any arm of flesh; but let your trust be in the mercy of the Lord.

Would you seek the narrow path which leadeth unto life? Listen to the voice of the Redeemer, saying to you, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Would you look for final victory over all your enemies and the reward of all your toil? "To him that overcometh," saith the Lord Jesus, "will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on His throne." Yet a little while, and the feet which stand fast in Christ, amidst the temptations, and trials, and snares of this evil world, shall stand fast on the hill of Sion, no more to go out for ever.

To one and all, to young and old, to ministers and people, there are two things which cannot be sufficiently urged upon us in the present state of the religious world—reading the Scriptures, and Prayer. It is impossible to stand fast without these; and in the neglect of them, we discover the true causes of the divisions and apostacies which have afflicted the Church.

The advice of the Saviour to the Jews was, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." If such was His counsel to the Jews, who only possessed the Old Testament, in which Christ is dimly seen in types and shadows and prophetic declarations, shall not the command be dear to all whom he hath admitted behind the veil, to view an open mercy-seat and a Father's face in the bright glories of the Gospel history—the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Be not contented with cold, formal, occasional reading; but read the Bible as one that diggeth for hid treasures. It is the mine of the purest gold, even the glory of Christ's nature, the whole beauty of His character, the wonders of His everlasting faithfulness and power and love. It is the rock smitten for your spiritual refreshment, in the Son of God; the fountain open for sin and for uncleanness; not a broken cistern, not an occasional supply, but an everlasting and inex-

haustible well-spring of purity and peace and life : a well-spring which has supplied the want of every believer through almost six thousand years of this lost world's history, and which shall supply every needy soul that tastes it, until the river of the water of grace shall become the pure river of the water of life everlasting in glory. "Drink ye all of it."

The other duty that is required of all who would "stand fast in the Lord," is Prayer. "Wait on the Lord, and be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart : wait, I say, upon the Lord." "They that wait upon the Lord," in the duty of lowly and trustful prayer, "shall not want any good thing." Would we bring forth all those fruits of righteousness which are, by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God—then must we often go to Him who hath said, "In me is thy fruit found;" that our deadness of heart may be removed, our wills stirred up unto better resolutions, by holy and

heavenly influences from the Fountain of all grace. Communion with God at the mercy-seat is the loftiest privilege that a creature enjoys. Oh, who can look upon the depth of sin and darkness from which he has been raised, and see the glorious height on which he stands by the mercy of God in Christ, and not feel a continual impulse to seek the face of his reconciled Father, and drink from that presence, the richest draughts of comfort, and joy, and peace!

In the exercise of prayer there are special blessings to ask, in reference to our special wants. These, each believer will assuredly seek to understand, that he may not "ask amiss," but receive the fullest return to his prayers. Yet he will not be selfish in his petitions. He cannot think of his heavenly Father's adopting love, and forget his brethren in the great family of which he is a member. In the abounding love that fills his heart for all who are called of God to be Saints, he will embrace

in his prayer the youngest as well as the oldest, the strong and the weak, the nearest and dearest, as well as the strangers and foreigners who are not yet of the household of God.

But, surely, first in your remembrance will arise those to whom God has united you in the bonds of earthly relationship. For them, you will ask spiritual blessings with the same fervency as for yourself: for them—in days like the present, when a man's foes are often to be found in his own household, and when wolves in sheep's clothing are stealing into families and leading captive unstable and artless souls—surely, in such a time, you will not cease to implore God's protection from the wiles of the destroyer. Alas! how many a family is now mourning over a brother or sister snatched from them by the intrigues of priests and the delusions of the Devil's emissaries—for whom, in the days when all dwelt together in love, no prayers to God had ever been offered! Let me be-

seech you to pray one for another, that you may be defended from all adversities, and especially that dreadful adversity—apostacy from the faith once delivered to the Saints.

“ Pray,” yet again, “ for the peace of Jerusalem”—the peace of our own blessed Church, “ built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.” Pray that the God of peace may let His peace rest upon us: that he may confound the devices and destroy the weapons employed to disturb our unity and love. Pray that the Lord would grant to “ all bishops and pastors, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord”—pray that “ the most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues,” may be poured into all their hearts; and may they never forget, that though they speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, their

words are but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

And, last of all, "Brethren dearly beloved, and longed for," pray for us—the ministers whom God hath appointed to speak to you the word of life, and shew you the way of salvation; pray that all the chances and changes of this parish—the difficulties, the trials, the temptations, the weaknesses of us its spiritual servants, may all turn out for the furtherance of the glorious Gospel of Christ, for the revival of true religion amongst us, and for the welfare, and peace, and salvation of us all.

"Be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord: forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

SERMON II.

“GIRD THY SWORD UPON THY THIGH, O MOST MIGHTY, WITH THY GLORY AND THY MAJESTY. AND IN THY MAJESTY RIDE PROSPEROUSLY BECAUSE OF TRUTH AND MEEKNESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS; AND THY RIGHT HAND SHALL TEACH THEE TERRIBLE THINGS. THINE ARROWS ARE SHARP IN THE HEART OF THE KING’S ENEMIES; WHEREBY THE PEOPLE FALL UNDER THEE.”—Psalm lxx., 3, 4, 5.

PERHAPS when David began this psalm he had in view only the celebration of Solomon’s marriage with Pharaoh’s daughter; but the Holy Ghost gave the pen of the ready writer a nobler flight, and whilst the affectionate father thought of glorifying only his own son, he was inditing one of the noblest songs in honour of the Son of God. There is no other to whom such language can be addressed; and as addressed to Christ, we have no difficulty in applying it to His glorious Person, to the majesty of His Kingdom, and to the

character and duties of His Church. Such applications of the glowing words of the Old Testament to the wondrous records of the New, is a most profitable mode of reading the Scriptures. It brightens our conceptions of the Divine nature of the Redeemer, introduces us to loftier views of the greatness of His work, and animates our hearts and minds with a warmer devotion to His service.

We cannot doubt that the welfare, the strength, the joy, and the salvation of the Church, depend on preserving in our minds the testimony which God gives, by the voice of prophets and apostles, to the glory of His incarnate Son, the magnitude of His work, the eternity and righteousness of His kingdom. We cannot doubt that it is by the proclamation of these glorious things we shall best recommend the Gospel of Salvation to perishing men, and cause the Redeemer's Church to feel more continually and more intensely the spirit which dwelt in Saint Paul when he said,

“ God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The verses that have been read evidently represent the Redeemer as about to engage in a warfare: “Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.” He is not only exhibited as a warrior, but as a king. He has glory and majesty, as well as weapons of war. He takes the field, not like a poor knight-errant who has nothing but his sword to help him, but He comes with all the array of a monarch. The passage reminds us of the sight which Saint John saw in the Revelations, as recorded in the nineteenth chapter: “And I saw Heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and His

name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in Heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." "And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, 'King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.' " These expressions might convey terrific ideas to our minds, if they stood alone and we had no passages to explain the true nature of the warfare which Christ maintains.

Our text says, "Because of truth and meekness and righteousness." These beautiful things had been lost, and disowned by the fallen race of man; and it was to restore them that this new empire was set up in the earth. The King to whom the crown was given was Himself "truth and meekness and righteousness." These were the attributes of His person and character: they were strikingly displayed in His teaching, and are the best characteristics of His Church. A warfare having such objects in view could not be carried on with carnal weapons; and man-

kind never yet were driven to accept of the Gospel by a persecuting spirit. But the very name of war—the mention of arms, implies some opposition to be overcome. So, in the fifth verse, we find that the Redeemer has enemies, over whom He will obtain the victory ; “Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies ; whereby the people fall under Thee.”

Here we have two subjects, which, if rightly considered, will, with God’s blessing, prove beneficial to all who have the hearing ear and the inquiring heart :—The enemies of Christ—and, The weapons by which they are subdued.

I. As to the enemies of Christ, which are here called “the King’s enemies.” All men are naturally such ; for as long as guilt remains upon the conscience, and sin reigns over the will of fallen man, and pollution rests upon the soul, that creature must, from the very essence of the divine

nature, and from the nature of the creature, make him an enemy of a pure, perfect, and merciful God. "The carnal mind is unruly against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed can be." Human nature is joined in a conspiracy with the powers of darkness against the law and the majesty of God, and Christ has come to defeat and destroy it. The palace in which the strong man, armed, keepeth his goods in fancied security, has to be invaded and stormed by a stronger than he—even the mighty God—who will spoil him of his prey and deliver his miserable captives out of his hand. Strange to say, it is a willing captivity, out of which they have no desire to be delivered. When the children of Israel were mightily oppressed by Jabin, King of Canaan, with his nine hundred chariots of iron, they cried unto the Lord, and He heard them; but the sinner is charmed with his bondage, and never raises a finger to effect his deliverance. It is out of a rebellious people

that the Redeemer forms His Church ; it is out of the ruin of God's first creation that Christ gathers the stones which are to be built up a glorious temple to Himself—of which He will be the in-dweller, its light and its glory. It is from such enemies as you and I are, alluding to nature, and the will of the flesh and the will of man, that the Saviour comes to seek His portion and his people. Yes, brethren, every believer that has fallen down to embrace the cross, and cried out in the great need of his awakened mind, "What shall I do to be saved?"—every believer who looks to the vastness of that joy when Christ shall accomplish the number of His elect, and manifest His kingdom ; every believer who, thus looking, falls down at the feet of Jesus, and cries, "My Lord, and my God," was once a rebel against His grace ; every believer whom the Conqueror has subdued, was once His enemy, and the bond-servant of sin, and walked according to the course of this world, according to

the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. "Such, brethren, were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." And here we see the great mystery of God's love,—the glory of the unsearchable riches of Christ:—"That scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet, peradventure, for a good man some will even dare to die: but God commended His love towards us, so that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." To this point our view must be steadfastly and intensely directed. For until the sinner sees the guilt, the shame, the ingratitude, and the misery of his rebellion against God, and how he is opposing every interest of his own soul by continuing the servant of Satan, he never can have a saving view of a Redeemer; it is in vain that we speak to him of the "love of Christ which passeth knowledge," or of being filled with all the fulness of God. All our statements

regarding the blessedness of God's reconciled children, their peace and joy in believing, their victory over the world, their own renewed condition, their inward satisfaction, and their glorious prospects,—all sounds to the sinner as the voices of Mary Magdalene and the other women who proclaimed the resurrection in the ears of the unbelieving apostles :—"Their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not."

Whence comes all this sad unwillingness in sinners to believe that there is a far happier state to be in than the one they are so fond of? How can creatures be so infatuated as to "love darkness rather than light," guilt rather than innocence, uneasy dread rather than security, the iron rod of Satan rather than the loving sway of Him who is "fairer than the children of men?" It is the "evil heart of unbelief"—the original, deep-rooted aversion of the soul to God and His service. Ye can bear witness, on whom the mighty change from

death to life has passed, how far it found you from the love of God, how greatly averse you were to be translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. And ye, brethren, whose hearts the message of life hath never reached; ye who are daily, hourly, putting away salvation from you, and hiding yourselves, like guilty Adam, from the presence of the Lord God, whenever you hear His voice crying "Where art thou?"—you can bear witness of the resistance I speak of; you could relate a fearful history of opposition to the calls of mercy, of struggles against convictions of sin, of good resolutions quickly broken, of a deliberate design to go only a certain length in obedience, but not a step farther:—you can tell of many a time when, like Agrippa, you could say to God's ministers, "Almost ye persuade me to be a Christian;"—or when, like Felix, you felt that as the preacher "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," you trembled

between the love of sin and the desire of salvation ; but choosing to give the victory to Satan, you opposed the power of God's Spirit, and sent Him away till some "convenient season." And how long is this to last ? Till Death shall come ? Have you made a covenant with him that he is to give good warning of his visit ? "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee !" Thus, life, that was given you to serve God, to embrace his precious mercy in Christ, to glorify Him by a life of faith and love, will be cut off and brought to a fearful end ; its opportunities gone, its Sabbaths counted out, and the Book of Life laid by for ever. Oh, who would be found among the enemies of the Lord in such an hour !

II. But let us see what are the weapons to be used against such enemies, and with what chance of success. "Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies." The arrow is sudden, secret,

and swift in its motion, and well describes the weapons of God, in Christ Jesus reconciling the world to Himself, which have smitten to the heart, in mercy, many a redeemed soul before it knew from what quarter the blow was sent. Like the wind that bloweth where it listeth, we may hear the sound of the arrow, but we cannot tell "whence it cometh or whither it goeth." Like the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, the arrows taken from the armoury of Heaven are "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword." Unlike the arrows used in mortal fight, which are made of many materials, these are made wholly and entirely of one thing, — the pure, undeserved, unconditional, everlasting love of God. There is no promise given in the Gospel, no invitation made by Christ Jesus, no description of the mercy treasured up in Him, no recorded act of the whole Blessed Trinity,—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,—that does not spring from a free compassion towards

E

sinner in the heart and mind of God. And because it has "pleased the Father that in Christ all fulness should dwell," the arrows of the mighty Captain are never exhausted. The quiver is still full—and every arrow is barbed with the same almightiness which smote the heart of Saul of Tarsus, or made the dying thief turn his eyes to Christ in faith and love, as to the King of Heaven.

And, dear brethren, while there remains a soul to be saved, or a sin to be subdued within that soul, by these blessed darts, there will be no lack of them in the Saviour's hand,—and no lack of strength in His arm to wing them home into the sinner's heart and conscience. With these arrows were the men who crucified the Lord of Glory pricked to the heart, when they cried out to the Apostles, "men and brethren, what shall we do?" With these arrows does the conqueror make one, whose soul has been stupified with sin and turned away in recklessness from God, feel that

“the wages of sin is death,” even as Ahab felt when the deadly arrow pierced him through the joints of his armour, and he drove away from the battle a dying man. They force the wounded transgressor to flee from himself and take refuge in the righteousness of Christ, and embrace the completeness unto life eternal, so freely given unto every believer in the Lamb of God. Thus unbelief is slain; thus infidelity towards Christ is smitten down; thus the new law of a new being is communicated, instead of “the old man, which was corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts,” and the life which he, so lately living and walking only by sense, now lives, he lives “by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him, and gave Himself for him;” thus hatred and alienation from God, which are the very life’s blood of sin, are drained away: and the fountains of love are opened by the arrows of Christ within the heart, to make His law delightful, and to be the reigning

impulse unto holiness, thenceforth and for ever.

O ! it is a wonderful process, and as sure as it is wonderful, by which that arrow of the Word, when it reaches a sinner, alters the whole mass of the mind's affections, so that he can no longer lift up his hand against God, but is carried out a dead man, —dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ;—and when, from having been, perhaps, long ashamed of the Gospel and its great theme and subject of mercy, he learns to count all things as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, his Lord.

Who that saw Moses strike the rock, and the waters gush out, could fail to say "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." Who that sees the arrows of Christ striking the rock of a sinner's heart and making a heart of flesh, can hesitate whence the virtue comes, and to whom the glory should be given.

We ministers are indeed entrusted with

the use of Christ's weapons of war—the arrows are put into our hands—but we can only draw the bow at a venture; it is God, even God the Spirit, that must direct the arrow to its destination. It is indeed our duty to draw the bow, like Jehu, with our full strength; to commend ourselves, if possible, to every man's conscience, in the sight of God; to harden our faces against the pride and scorn of men; to speak boldly, as we ought to speak, so that the word of salvation be not bound, nor the Holy Spirit straitened by the perverse opposition of those around us.

We read in the most plaintive elegy that ever was penned, (2 Sam. i.) that the bow of Jonathan never turned back—never returned empty—so the bow of our Jonathan, the well-beloved Son of God, is never bent in vain. Every arrow framed and feathered, and shot by His love, directed by His power, and striking in the Spirit's mightiness upon the heart, will surely subdue it. And here, my

brethren, is the comfort of God's ministers when that awful remembrance crosses our minds—"Woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel." And when we measure our own feebleness with the mightiness of our work, and seem as grasshoppers in our own sight, this Scripture is our only trust—"Not by might, nor by power, but *my Spirit*, saith the Lord of hosts." Yes, the bow of our Joseph "abides in strength," and his hands are made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; His grace is sufficient for His ministers, and His strength is made perfect in their weakness. Many of you have felt it so to be—felt that the word "Sown in weakness was raised in power." And we would lift up our hearts in cheerful hope to the all-conquering King of His saints, that others now before me, who may be despising the Archer, and thinking lightly of the arrow of the word, as the Philistine despised David and his weapons, may yet find that arrow sharp within their hearts,

and themselves subdued, and their sinful idolatry slain, as the haughty giant fell beneath the sling and the pebble of the son of Jesse. And we would say, from love to your souls who are yet unsubdued by God's grace, the Lord add to the number of his prisoners and captives, how many soever they may be, an hundred fold. The Lord grant that an arrow dipped, not in venom, but in the infinite love of Jesus, may pierce the heart of every foe that He hath among you; fill it with that godly sorrow for sin which worketh repentance not to be repented of; cause it to love Him it so long resisted, and taste the blessedness of those glad tidings of great joy which His Gospel and His grace offered.

But, my brethren, while there are these arrows of love to subdue the enemies of Christ and change them into his friends, there are arrows of wrath in a quiver of judgment, reserved for that time when vengeance will be taken upon them that

know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. You, in whose hearts the arrows of love have found no entrance to make you fall down subdued before the Lord, will find the arrows of His indignation slaying you for ever, when the hour of His mercy shall be passed. All His enemies must be put under His feet—either subdued by His love, or crushed by His wrath. Do not let the weapons that are now used in mercy, merely produce conviction and alarm. Do not let them only point to the sins you have committed, and make you think that the anger of God is fixed upon you, because of them. Do not let them make you despair in your rebellion, and cause you to cry, in the hardness of your heart, “Let us alone, Jesus, thou Son of God; art thou come to torment us before the time?” Do not so hear the word in continued unbelief as to fill up the measures of your sins, nor let it excite you to greater opposition against it, nor be contented with a half acceptance—

a partial improvement, like the heartless obedience of Herod, or the imperfect persuasion of Agrippa. No—give yourself no rest until you are truly turned to God,—until the arrows of His word, dipped, for salvation, in the blood of His Son, shall stay the enmity that is in you, and make you the willing and happy servant of Christ.

Beware of opposing this glorious Gospel and its mighty Prince, when he comes girded for the battle. Beware of the guilt of hindering others from accepting Him, as well as refusing Him yourself. And this is no needless caution, my brethren; for He Himself has said, “He that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.” “He that is not with me is against me.” It is a fearful thing to be by nature a hardened rebel against His love. But what shall we think of those who desire to injure His cause? the cause that brought down the Son of God from Heaven; that made Him “a man of sorrow and

acquainted with grief;" the cause that made Him "the despised and rejected of men;" the cause that made Him endure the contradictions of sinners against Himself; the cause that nailed Him on a cross, and pierced Him, and broke His heart. What, I say, shall we think of them who set themselves against their blessed Saviour? Oh! it is not a subject for reviling, and indignation, and bitter words; it can only be a subject of deep humiliation and prayer,—of humiliation at the thought, that any who bear the Christian name should be so much under the influence of sin and unbelief as to set themselves in secret enmity to the Lord who bought them—of prayer that the good Spirit of God may yet be sent to convince them of their obduracy; and ere it be too late, prevent this total loss of their immortal souls. Let no one think that he will injure the Gospel, or succeed in overturning its doctrines, by lifting his puny arm against it. Let no one think that the everlast-

ing love of God in Christ can be checked or frustrated by the miserable opposition of a worm of the dust. No—triumph it will, and it must; and in its overwhelming victory over everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, most horrible of all will be its crushing triumph over the opposers of its progress and the enemies of its mighty champion. He will make them the authors of their own confusion; and glorify the cause which they have laboured to oppress, with still greater manifestation of grace and glory to the Church, arising out of the very opposition of these His infatuated foes.

To-day, then, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts. Take with you words of repentance and sorrow, and turn to the Lord, that He may have mercy upon you; and to our God, that He may abundantly pardon. Plead the blood of Christ, which no past sins can annul, to those who flee earnestly unto God by Him. Plead the everlastingness of His covenant. Plead

the glory of His name as the God that redeemeth your souls from death. Plead the intercession of Jesus in your behalf. Plead God's promise, that Christ shall see of the travail of His soul in believers and be satisfied; and in the power of divine grace, join yourselves unto Him as the purchase of His cross and the workmanship of His Spirit. Let the long-suffering of Christ, of which you are this day the monuments, constrain you to yield yourselves unto Him as those that are alive from the dead—undividedly, and for ever and ever.

SERMON III.

“ MY STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS.”—
2 Corinthians, xii., 9.

WHEN we read the gracious promises of God in the Gospel, and look at the character of those who profess to receive them, how very little do they seem to be realized ! In nothing do we discover more of the remains of the old man within us, than in the unwillingness we have to profit by the assurances of God's love towards us. The lingering love of sin—the desire to owe as little as we can to the undeserved mercy of a reconciled God in Christ Jesus,—the pride of self-sufficiency, incline the heart to receive with indifference the proffered aid and grace of Him “without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy.” In the neglect of the armour provided for us as the soldiers of the cross, we are cast

F

down in the evil day, and Satan gets advantage over us. We see around us too many scarcely trying to resist the world, the flesh, and the devil, though they profess to be engaged in a great spiritual fight. We see them giving way, without an effort, to the cares of this life; and yielding to the sinful outbursts of passion, without the opposition of a thought, or the breathing of a prayer. We see the dark flood of sorrow carrying away all their resolutions of trust in God and resignation to His will. We see temptation trying them, and they fall into its snares. We see the terrors of death compassing them round about, and they are stricken with dismay. The recollections of every one of us will furnish too many examples of such a want of reliance on the grace and mightiness promised in the Gospel; and the consideration of it may well lead us to suspect the imperfection and insincerity of our Christian profession and walk. If, in the review of our characters, there

are any signs of grace continually wanting, any improvement resisted, any change not made, there must be some serious defect. It proves that we are not fully and abidingly incorporated with the God of our salvation; that though members of His Church, we are not partakers of the life that flows from the vine to the branches; that though the Spirit is striving within us, He is striving greatly in vain. And then the reflecting mind will naturally think, that this defective and feeble life—if life it can be called—does by no means answer the descriptions given us, in the Word of God, of the comforts and the privileges of His children. The reflecting mind will consider that this distrust of God, this submission to the power of sin, this uncomfortable sense of resistance to the promises and offered strength of God, are very serious intimations that there is yet no true and saving interest in the Gospel. God has ordained certain powerful means and operations for the recovery

of a sinner ; and He graciously vouchsafes a newness of life to every repenting and believing soul. Then, why am I not walking “worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work ?” Why am I weak when I ought to be strong—why am I not led by the Spirit of God, but taken captive by Satan at his will ?

It is an interesting inquiry. It concerns our whole character : it bears full upon our hopes of eternal life. The answer is plain, however. By relying on our weakness, we render ourselves unworthy to receive God’s strength. The sinner is unconscious of any insufficiency in himself. He vainly imagines that he can turn himself “from dead works to serve the living God ;” and, by his own unassisted will and reason, improve his character and prepare for a future life. It is true that we hear him continually saying in such words as the Church teaches,—“Without thee the frailty of man cannot but fall.” His attitude and his language points him out as

feeble, helpless, and looking to God for grace. But within the heart there is the old pride of self-reliance; the "leaning to his own understanding;" the "trusting to his own heart." Upon such a one the gifts of God cannot be profitably bestowed. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Practically a stranger to the powerful means of grace, which the humble spirit and a living faith in the Gospel impart, he remains in his original weakness and sin.

The deepest humility, the conviction of our inability for good, the prevailing feeling of destitution, the longing after God, lie at the foundation of the religion of Christ. His own first words, when He stood up to preach, were, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." And when his disciples asked Him who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, "Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them." The whole scheme of redemption is formed on the fact of a sinner's utter inability to

save himself, and his natural incapacity to renew his character. Therefore, all who earnestly desire divine fulness and strength will most fervently pray God to deliver them from self-dependence; to give them such dealings of His providence, and such measures of His grace, as will destroy all vain pretensions within them. They will consider no chastisement, no pain or sorrow, too severe, which the Lord shall see needful to produce this holy feeling; and they will bless the days in which convictions brought them to a better knowledge of their own weakness, and a perfect reliance on God's strength.

The life of the apostle Paul affords a striking illustration of the subject we are considering.

We read in the chapter from which the text is taken, that he had been remarkably favoured by a vision and revelation of the Lord. He had been taken "up into paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not possible for a man to utter."

Of the nature of this extraordinary event, we cannot speak particularly ; but, whatever it was, we know that it was, of all things that could happen to the apostle, the one most likely to lift him up too highly. It was sure to make him think that he was no longer in danger of falling away ; that he was secure in the almighty aid of God, and could live now without watchfulness and care. And he confesses that he was greatly elated with what had taken place ; for he says, " Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet me." Of the need and benefit of this monitor the apostle does not seem to have been conscious ; and he actually poured forth his repeated prayers for its removal. " For this thing," he says, " I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me."

He was an inspired apostle, but his extraordinary gifts did not set him above

the necessity for correction. He was a holy man, and highly honoured in his work; but he was still a dependent creature on the merey of God in Christ. He was wonderfully faithful as a minister of the Gospel, and could tell others of their need of afflictions and thorns to humble them; but he was slow to believe that his own soul required something to abase it. The Lord denied him the request of his lips. He “knew his necessities before he asked, and his ignorance in asking.” He knew that he would best serve his faithful apostle,—not by the removal of his trouble, but by giving him grace to bear it,—by being humbled under the mortification, and made to triumph over it. “And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”

The weaker the apostle actually was, and the more he was left to feel his weakness, the more he would rely upon supernatural aid—the more manifest would the

Lord's interposition be, and the more His name glorified. And the apostle wisely understood God's dealing with him, and submitted patiently and contentedly. He says, "Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me; therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak then am I strong." When I sink under the consciousness of my own feebleness; when I feel mortified by a sense of my imperfections; when the thorn in my flesh tells me that, after all, I am only a poor worm of the dust; then am I driven to more firm and implicit reliance upon the God of all power and might, and find it true what the Lord said to me—"My strength is made perfect in weakness."

I said, at the beginning, that it is for want of this reliance upon God in the consciousness of our weakness, that so many professing Christians come short of

the peace, and the joy, and the holiness which the Gospel is designed to bring to every man's heart who receives it. It would almost seem that they had no conviction of the need of divine grace to carry on the work of their salvation; or, what is more probable, they have never considered religion in the light of a work at all. They may not be chargeable with hypocrisy in the use of the Church's prayers; but their lives are not in accordance with their prayers. They are earnest as far as they go; and, perhaps, entertain a hope that the humble impressions which they receive, while kneeling in the house of God, will remain with them after they return to the world, and that the power of God will always be present with them, to protect and preserve. "But he that trusteth to his own heart is a fool." Day after day they go forth with no thought but of their own vain schemes,—and with no reliance but upon their own fallible judgment, and the broken reed of their

own poor endeavours. How often do they rush into temptation without thinking of their danger,—and throw themselves into the midst of their enemies, with nothing but their own blindness to lead, and their own weakness to help them. They are insensible to the need of God's aid, and seem to be equally insensible to His presence. In the words of the apostle, when writing on another subject,—“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” “Weak” in complying with the invitations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. “Sickly” in their spiritual life; “sickly” in their complexions as the children of God. “Asleep” in their dreadful delusion, that they will ever reach either the character or the rewards of God's faithful people.

My brethren, “an enemy has done this.” Our great adversary, the devil, has no deeper plot laid for our destruction than teaching us a religion which has outwardly all the humility and lowliness which Christ

requires of his followers, but inwardly leaves us to follow the devices and desires of our own hearts. By this means he has cast down many souls, who were ready to cry, in the devotion of the Church, "Peace, peace," when sudden destruction came upon them. He leads his victims to rest all their hopes, and lean for all needful strength, upon the mere profession of the Gospel. Human feelings and human strivings, are all the little opposition Satan allows his captives to put forth; and we all know who will have the victory.

It surely cannot be a happy thought to any one thus falling into sin, through the craft and subtlety of the devil, that the almightiness of God's grace and strength were all the while ready to help him, if he would have sought it! It must, indeed, add to the bitterness of every sin committed, that there was a Saviour standing by, saying, "My strength is made perfect in weakness." It will certainly add to the cruel aggravation of final and everlasting

misery, that all “the promises of God, which are yea, and amen, in Christ Jesus,” had been rejected as nothing worth; and the continual lament of the lost spirit, as he bemoans his wretched state, will be, “Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.”

“My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Remember who it is that speaks. The Lord Jesus Christ. *His* strength! how mighty must it be. And offered to whom?—to a man of like passions with us. And when is it given?—in our weakness. Who would not wish to be weak as water, that the power of Christ might rest upon him?

Let me remind you, brethren, how soon we need the aid of the Redeemer’s strength. By faith we rest upon His glorious person for acceptance with God; upon His righteousness for our justification in the sight of God; upon His fulness for the supply of all their need; upon His blood

for pardon of guilt and purification from sin ; upon His presence for comfort ; upon His spirit for sanctification ; upon His faithfulness for hope.

To know our own utter vileness, from which alone the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse ; to know our utter weakness, which only His almighty power can sustain : and then to know that *as* His blood cleanseth from all sin, *so* His grace is sufficient for the very feeblest of His believing disciples, may well make us flee to Him, and trust in Him, casting all our care upon Him. Are you, brethren, thus trusting to Him, and availing yourself of His strength ? Seek continually, I beseech you, to depend more and more upon Him for restoring your souls, and for leading you in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. The Good Shepherd is perfect in grace and might—in tenderness and strength. The young and weak Christian, or the old man in Christ, in seasons when they are in heaviness under some painful experience,

which shall afterwards yield the peaceful fruits of righteousness, are led by Him gently, and treated with that tenderness which their peculiar circumstances require. “He carrieth the lamb in His bosom, and gently leads those that are with young.”

Let me remind you of the work in which you are engaged, and the various ways in which it is described in the Scriptures:—it is likened unto a man building a house—to a soldier fighting a battle—to a prize-runner running a race. You have this afternoon heard the account that St. Paul gives of a Christian’s armour. Read it at your leisure, and ask yourself if you ever found the need of all that protection. Why does he use such language? Surely, because it was the strongest manner of expressing what he felt to be needful in the life of a true believer in Christ. The apostle did not write this description for writing’s sake. He did not write it to dazzle us with a brilliant picture, or kindle in us a love of military display. He wrote

it to animate the courage of Christ's feeble and trembling disciples. This courage *you* must have, if you would be saved. It takes its rise in a simple and entire dependence upon the love, the power, and the truth of God,—and bearing up under every discouragement, meets the difficulties that rise, and looks with cheerful confidence to the end.

Use every effort which the Gospel enjoins, and which the grace of the Gospel provides ; but also look up in humble trust to God that He who hath bought you with the blood of His own Son's cross, will not leave you a prey to Satan ; that He will “teach your hands to war and your fingers to fight ” successfully. Satan may rage, while he sees the work of divine grace advancing within you, but his malice will be in vain. You may be “sometimes afraid, but put your trust in God.” Let past deliverances animate you with hopes of future triumph, and say, with David, “He that delivered me out of the paw of

the bear and the lion will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."

Let me speak to you as engaged in building a temple to the Lord—and this is another figure to explain a Christian's life. "Except the Lord build the house their labour is but lost that build it." It is not a temple like Solomon's—a glorious sight for the eyes of man to behold, and to make him exclaim, "What manner of stones and what buildings are here!" No; this temple is within you—it is even in the heart—it is to be "an habitation of God through the Spirit." In doing this work we are in the situation of Nehemiah, when he began to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. He and his people were a feeble band, and they had enemies to harass and hinder them. But he feared not, neither was dismayed, for he says, "We made our *prayer* unto God, and set a *watch* against them day and night."

Here there is an excellent example for us in our own anxious work. He prayed

and watched. In the arduous conflict and labour of Christian life, prayer without watchfulness is presumptuous sloth, and tempts God to let loose upon us those spiritual enemies against whom we will not guard. Watchfulness without prayer is presumptuous pride, and tempts God to deny that grace which must be manifested, and owned, and honoured in our weakness.

Look into your nature and examine how low it is, how deeply fallen from that purity and glory in which it came from the hand of God. The temple of God is in ruins; there is "not left one stone upon another that is not thrown down." Holy affections are buried under the mass of evil that hath overspread the heart. The fine work of the tabernacle is broken down with axes and hammers. The very qualities and affections which were intended by your Maker to advance your happiness, to promote your security, and to be the instruments of your eternal blessedness, are so ruined and broken by sin that they lie in

your way, to the hindrance of God's work of grace within you. But who is sufficient for these things? Where is the power in yourself to help yourself?

How hard is it to unlearn the things that a heart of unbelief has taught us! How hard to grow up in all things unto a similarity with Christ who is our head; hard to perform the duties of the Gospel; hard to commune with God frequently and fervently; hard to deny the pleadings of self-righteousness on the one hand, and of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, on the other! And can we, in such a labour as this, waste one of those precious hours which the long-suffering of a merciful God bestows on us for the attainment of eternal life? Does it become us to take our ease, as if we had nothing to be anxious for, when we should be endeavouring to improve our meetness for heaven? And if, in the consciousness of our helplessness to do anything pleasing to God without the aid of His grace, we

sit down, and fold our hands, and do nothing, will it not turn to our greater condemnation that we did this with the assurance that God was willing to “perfect His strength in our weakness,”—that *that* almighty grace, which never yet failed any one who sought it, was ready to be made over to us in all the immensity of its power, “without money and without price,” merely for the asking for it? “Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

The weaker we are the more earnestly should we pray. The weaker the warrior, the builder, the labourer, the more manifest it becomes that the power is of God. The weaker we feel ourselves to be, the more constantly and closely shall we cling to the heavenly arm stretched out to aid us. In this blessed state of lowly dependence, we must seek continually to be found—and welcome the trials, however severe—welcome the afflictions, however sharp—

through which this blessedness is to be produced.

Happy are the sorrowful who, in their sorrow, are led to find the God of peace. Happy the blind who, in their blindness, have found the light of the world—even Jesus the Sun of Righteousness. Happy the lame who, in their lameness, have found an arm to save and a right hand to help them. Happy the disappointed, and the careworn, and the trembling heart, and the broken spirit, and “the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees,” who, in their tribulation, have found Him who turneth the shadows of death itself into the smiles of morning—who saith to “them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not.”

Welcome tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword, if they be the means of bringing us to live in dependence on the strength of God—to show, by our conquest over all evil passions, and our endurance

of all earthly trial, that the blessed Gospel is indeed to us the power of God unto salvation; that Christ is truly “made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;” “that the life which we now live is by faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us,”—that we may be able to feel, from the inmost chamber of our hearts—“Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside Thee.”

SERMON IV.

“THE GLORIOUS LIBERTY OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.”

Romans viii. 21.

WHEN the earth came forth from the hands of God it was perfect in beauty, and possessed everything that infinite wisdom could supply to make man happy. And man himself was fitted with a body and a soul to enjoy the boundless provision God had made for his use. This the Bible tells us; for we never could have found it out in what we now see around us—man with a diseased frame, and disordered senses, and depraved appetites, and a short life—the earth cursed with thorns and thistles, and barren harvests, and pestilential waters, and earthquakes, and volcanic fires. Born in sin ourselves, and brought up among sinners suffering the wages of sin in a thousand

forms of pain and wretchedness, we could not imagine the world ever to have been anything but a sorrowful and wicked place ; or man any other than an unhappy dying creature. Everything bears the stamp of sin ; and the apostle only states what we feel to be true, when he says, in the verse after the text, “ We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” There is a restraint upon everything, and the world presents to us a scene of continual striving against it. There is both in man and the earth which he inhabits, a hindrance to happiness and peace ; and St. Paul calls this “ The bond of corruption ; ” and he places in strong contrast with it “ The glorious liberty of the children of God.”

The Scriptures abound with expressions which plainly declare that the Gospel was designed to break the bondage under which sin had placed the world ; that the coming of Jesus Christ was to restore the dominion of God upon the hearts of men, and speak

the words of peace, and forgiveness, and comfort to the slaves of Satan ; that the wretched captive to lust, the world, and the fear of death, might find a mighty Deliverer, ready to redeem him from the curse of a sinful and polluted condition, and put him into one of purity and holiness.

Who can read that beautiful narrative in the fourth chapter of St. Luke, beginning at the sixteenth verse, without a deep feeling of thankfulness to God at the testimony Christ himself gives to the restoring and emancipating power of the Gospel ? Who can fail to be charmed with the grace of the Redeemer, when He announces Himself as the Messiah of the prophets, “the Desire of all nations ?”

“And He came to Nazareth,” says the Evangelist, “where He had been brought up ; and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet

H

Esaias. And when He had opened the book He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And He closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth."

Here, I say, was a great sight—the Redeemer fulfilling in His own preaching the promises of the Gospel, foretold by holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and His language well describes both the condition of mankind as

sinners, and the nature of "the glorious liberty" into which they were now to be translated. He repeats the same sentiment (John viii. 32) when He is remonstrating with the Jews: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The Jews could never bear the idea of subjection to any one, and falsely answered, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." St. Paul to the Romans sets forth this truth very largely and repeatedly, as in the sixth chapter, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of

doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

Here we have the Gospel described as an emancipation from the slavery of sin, that is, from the yoke of Satan. The language is perfectly plain. The disobedient, the corrupt, the unconverted, the earthly-minded, are said to be entirely under the government of the evil one; led to do his bidding, to accomplish his will; and of his will there can be no doubt: we see it in the ruin of mankind—his will is that all should be lost. It is the will of God that all should be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. Hence there has long existed a mighty struggle between two kings and two kingdoms. The King and kingdom of Light, and the King and kingdom of Darkness. This conflict is seen going on both outwardly in the world, and inwardly in the hearts and consciences of men. In the world we see it in the opposition that is always made by some persons

against anything like a religious principle, or a religious observance. You may see it in families. Some would seem to prefer any inconvenience rather than have the appearance of being godly, or doing a Christian act. They would be offended and shocked if we told them they were in bondage to Satan, and they would declare that what they did was all of their own free will and pleasure. But they do not know that they have no free will and pleasure of their own. They are in subjection to the power of sin, and they are taking a part in the conflict that is going on between light and darkness. It matters nothing that they are present during divine service, or that they use the devout forms of prayer which were intended for penitent sinners and believing followers of Christ. With this outward show of piety, Satan is quite content to leave them, as long as he can shut the truth out of their heart. He knows that truth is saving truth, only when it is perceived and felt,—only when it

takes deep hold of the affections and becomes life,—appearing in the new nature and the new character. It makes no impression on him to hear his captives saying, “ I am a miserable sinner—the burden of sin is intolerable ”—as long as they do not feel this in their lives, as long as they continue to enjoy life and spare themselves no gratifications, and feel no uneasiness about their souls.

And such is the infatuation,—such the power of the spirit of evil over man’s debased heart,—that even when he has been made to feel somewhat of the burden and grief of sin, he has not the resolution to come out of it. There may be a small beginning, a faint desire, a step taken towards God, but no conversion of soul. And until the sinner is brought entirely out of the spirit of disobedience and the waywardness of lust, the ways of God are always grievous; holiness of life is distasteful; the society of religious people is oppressive; the duties of religion are incon-

venient and troublesome. And so many, after the slightest taste, desire to turn back to all their sinful indulgences, like the Israelites, who desired to go back to the fleshpots of Egypt. They were a carnal people in the midst of their holy profession. Their hearts were not right with God. The chain of sin was rivetted upon them by the very means which were mercifully designed for their deliverance. And so is it to day. No minister of Christ can be long in finding how many unconverted people still come to the Church—who have a positive dislike of God's ways, and seem determined that, preach what we may, they will never be found so weak and bigotted as to repent and turn unto the Saviour. Let me say to them, Do you not feel that you are slaves? Is there not within you some hidden power that will not let you do as sometimes you think you ought to do? Are there not sometimes passages of Scripture that jar most unpleasantly against your feelings—

that seem to describe your very case? But something puts them on one side, and you go home and forget them altogether. A friend, who is anxious for your salvation, puts into your hands a book which he thinks may be useful to you, and in some degree suited to your taste: but after a few hurried glances at its pages you send it back; the tyrant within would not allow you to read it, lest you should believe and be saved. And so of all other things: it is the same bondage that forbids you to move one step towards a salvation freely offered you—a Saviour waiting to be gracious, a Holy Spirit offering His power to deliver you from your wretched state of captivity and sin. You read in the Scriptures of men and women possessed of evil spirits: you are spiritually in the same fearful case; and the spirit that troubles you is described by the apostle, as “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” By that spirit is every man, not created anew in

Christ Jesus unto good works, possessed and enslaved; and the machinery he employs is, "the carnal mind that is enmity against God." By this he overspreads all the powers and faculties of the soul, and moulds them to his will. I know that man, in the pride of his moral worth, can have no pleasure in listening to these things. "This is a hard saying—who can bear it?" No one, my brethren; no one can bear it, until he has learned the vileness and guilt of sin, in that school where the sin-convincing spirit is the Almighty Teacher. Yet, nevertheless, they are the true sayings of God, the groundwork of the mediation of Christ Jesus, and, therefore, His ministers must declare them unto you.

Let me tell you some particulars of the different forms in which this bondage of Satan is manifested. First of all by unbelief; by prejudice against the scheme of salvation in Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God for its accomplishment;

by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; by carnal-mindedness; by overweening love of self; by a perverted judgment; by the debasement of the affections; by the eager pursuit of the pleasures of sin; by neglect of prayer and searching the Scriptures; by an atheistical independence of God; by persecuting Christ in His Gospel, in His cause, in His people; by setting up in the heart your own righteousness, to be admired and worshipped in place of Christ.

But let us turn to a more pleasing view, in which we trust that some, notwithstanding the devices of the enemy, are deeply and savingly interested—let us turn to behold “the glorious liberty of the children of God.” Who these children of God are, as actually enjoying this liberty, we learn from the chapter before us, as in the very opening—“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the

spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." And again, in the 15th verse, that the children are they who have "received the spirit of adoption," the Holy Spirit by which they were taken and adopted into the family of God, made fit for such a distinguished privilege and blessedness; purged of their natural corruption and degradation, and thus made one with the Holy God. And the children of God must be careful to continue in this holy relation. Having received this vast privilege, they must be careful to maintain it. For, let them never forget, that though taken out of the kingdom and yoke of Satan, they are not beyond the reach of his power. Ever going about, seeking whom he may devour, he is most daring in his attacks on those who have cast off his authority. And since they are now the subjects of another king, he would fain render their new condition as unhappy as he could. It is not merely what we have once been, though it be in

truth a great matter to have undergone the mighty change, to have been admitted into the household of God :—all now depends upon the abiding—upon the “ walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” The Spirit of holiness must be joined with our spirit, and shed His gracious influence over all our thoughts and affections, and all our character. There must not only be the outward testimony, but the inward consciousness. No man is a child of God to any happy purpose, unless he knows it and shews it. The Spirit is a living energy, and wherever He is, He decidedly and powerfully works. Thus, in verses 16 to 18, “ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God ; and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified together.”

We may now consider more particularly in what “ the glorious liberty of the children of God ” consists.

I. They are delivered from the penalty of sin. The sentence pronounced against Adam and all his guilty race, is no longer in force against the children of God in Christ Jesus. The dominion of sin, the might of its prince, and the bitterness of its wages, the wrath of God, and dismal death, were hanging over the sinner, amidst all his worldly enjoyments, like the sword which hung by a single thread over the head of the banqueter of old, turning his wine cup and his feast into gall and wormwood. But God's only begotten Son hath broken every fetter, satisfied every obligation, taken away the handwriting that was against us, "given deliverance to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." By "His own oblation of Himself once offered, He hath made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for our sins, and the sins of the whole world." The death-warrant is torn in pieces;—it is no longer "Thou shalt surely die;" but "Turn yourselves and live." Christ has gained

the victory over sin and the grave. He has conquered for us. We, as part of Him, as members of his body, are partakers of this triumph. The triumph is not yet complete in *us*, as it is in Him. We are not yet delivered from the corrupt, earthly body; the struggle is not yet over; the happiness is not yet perfect. But the chains are broken. The sentence is remitted. The way of life is laid open, and the principle of life is established within us—we have the promise, and the inheritance, and the foretaste, though we are not yet in complete possession—we have come out of the prison and are breathing the sweet air of a new creation, and walking in “the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

II. Having thus been made free from sin, we are freed from the bidding and tyranny of the evil one. The strong man armed is driven from his palace—the dwelling he had in our heart. One, mightier than he, has come upon him, and taken all his armour wherein he trusted. But he

yet keeps his power of temptation. Nevertheless, he cannot drive or force us into sin, nor lead us against our will. If we do fall into sin, we do not live in it: if we are tempted to disobedience, from the remains within us of natural infirmity, we grieve and repent, and come out of it. There is no one command or ordinance which we wilfully and continually disobey; no lust, unmortified; no selfishness, undisciplined and undenied; no sin that affords us delight. There is no evil passion which, like an overpowering tyrant, puts its yoke upon our neck and says, "Thou art mine." St. Paul, in his admonition to duty, intimates the christian state and privilege. "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it, in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

III. So it is no hopeless matter, as it would be if ye were under the law, and justification, and approval, and acceptance with God, were to be obtained by keeping it. Your state does not depend upon any course of ceremonial observances, nor upon your perfect obedience to the moral law. From such bondage, from such an impossible service, ye are set free, and your state depends on your holy oneness with God in Christ,—upon your having come out, *not from every act of sin*, but from all subjection to sin, and all pleasure in sin. Holiness and righteousness, though not perfectly worked out, are decidedly chosen, and heartily loved, on account of the new principle of life implanted. That life is Christ; “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Thus, then, are “the children of God”

living in a state of freedom from sin and fear. They have no distressful apprehensions. They have no sword hanging over their heads. Their conscience tells them, and their life bears witness, that they have yielded to the grace of God, which bringeth salvation ; and that it has delivered them from the dominion of evil : “ For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father ; ” whereby we are privileged to call God our Father,—to look upon Him fearlessly and comfortably, in that endearing light,—no longer as with a flaming sword taking vengeance, but as stretching out His arms for the embracing of a reconciled child. And, lastly, we are brought, by the mercies of our Lord and Saviour, to a glorious and eternal inheritance,—to the freedom from everlasting death, and the bright hope of life eternal. This is the crown of all, the final accomplishment of the glorious liberty. We shall partake of the conquest of Christ in all its divine fulness and perfection.

Having “put all enemies under His feet,” so will He put all enemies under ours. To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on His throne. Then will the last weapon of sin be destroyed, then the last link of slavery broken for ever.

Brethren, which shall we choose? Here are set before us slavery and death, liberty and life. I would to God that ye had no need of such a question; that every one were truly in Christ, walking in the light of gracious obedience, as He is in the light; and therefore an heir of that blessed patrimony, the exceeding and eternal weight of glory, which “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, which God hath laid up for them that love him.”

And why is it not thus? Is there nothing in your state that needs a Saviour? no sins to be pardoned in His blood; no prevalence in *His* intercession to obtain mercy; no tenderness, no freeness, no

warmth of love, in His invitations ? Is there no fulness of God to supply your wants ; no assurance of acceptance to encourage you ; no mercy in the heart of God, through Christ, towards you ? Have you not heard again and again the exceeding great and precious promises, whereof Christ is the faithful and true witness, to make you partakers of the divine nature ? And is there no glory to be revealed and bestowed by the Redeemer that may arouse a man, in the liberty wherewith the Son can make him free, to press toward the mark, for the prize of his high calling of God in Christ Jesus ?

Have you not read in the Scripture, that the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil ? He only, can destroy them in you. He only, can break the chain that binds you in the covenant of condemnation and death. He only, can annul that covenant for ever and instal you in all the blessings of the New Testament in His blood. And will you persist in fleeing from Him, and saying to

Him, "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?" O reflect, I pray you, that while Jesus alone can break, and will break, for all who seek his help, every link of the great enemy, He hath yet provided chains that will hold unbroken for the impenitent, even chains under everlasting darkness. Those chains must hold the lost spirits themselves unto the judgment of the great day. How surely, then, will they hold their slaves! Come, while yet you may, and take the liberty so freely offered you. Come, while yet you may, and hear the sound of every bursting fetter, as His almighty arm breaks them for ever. So shall the iron enter no more into your souls; and so shall you, like the glad captives in the day of jubilee, return every one to his city and every one to his inheritance in that kingdom of God in Christ, which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

A Help to Prayer. 18mo., printed in large type, cloth, 6d. Cloth boards, gilt edges, 1s.

The Mercy Seat upon the Ark, comprising a Prayer and Hymn for every Sunday in the Ecclesiastical Year. 2s. 6d.

Little Henry Martin, the Baby Missionary. 6d.

The Vision of Isaiah Concerning Jerusalem, from Chapter XL. to the end. Rendered into verse according to Bishop Louth's Translation: Cloth, gilt edges, 2s. 6d.

Glad Tidings ; or the Jubilee Year Considered. Price 6d.

By the Rev. W. JOWETT, M.A.

Published by Messrs. Seely, Fleet Street.

The Christian Visitor. In Four Parts.

1. Genesis to Job.—2. Psalms to Malachi (Second Edition).—3. Four Gospels.—4. Acts and Epistles (Third Edition). Each Volume to be had separately, price 3s. 6d. cloth.

Time and Temper : Selections from Scripture, with Remarks, &c. ; and Thoughts on Education. Third Edition, enlarged, 3s. 6d. cloth.

Helps to Pastoral Visitation. In Three Parts. Price 5s. cloth.

Our Lord's Last Discourse and Prayer, as recorded in St. John's Gospel, Chapters xiii. to xvii., with Practical Remarks. Price 3s. 6d. cloth.

An Exposition of the Lord's Prayer, in Twelve Lectures. Price 2s. in cloth.

Scriptural Characters : in Three Volumes.

1st Vol. Adam to Job. Price 4s.

2d Vol. Moses to Daniel. Price 4s.

3d Vol. On the New Testament, including the Life and Doctrine of our Lord. Price 4s. 6d.

Thoughts on Conversion ; with a Brief Memoir of the late Rev. Wm. Banks Jowett, B.A. A New Edition.

Christ the Unchanging and Eternal Saviour : a Sermon preached in the Parish Church of Clapham, on Sunday Evening, October 24, 1847, after the Death of the Venerable Archdeacon Dealtry. 1s.